Experiment 21: Panic Attack

1: Steps

A/N: Please be nice! This is my first work, so sorry for any inadequacy or cut-offs. All fan art is allowed, and please tell me when you do make some! I'd love to see it. Anyway, to the chapter!

Test Tube's P.O.V:
I stared silently down at my notes, shuffling through each page. I continued running my fingers through the files, trying to figure out which experiment I wanted to revise. I had gone through them all so many times, I just wasn't sure what to do at this point. I had hit a roadblock in my scientific studies, and that was honestly the biggest jeebweezer I had ever encountered. Each one was so.. arbitrary. I mean sure, they had it's use, but none of it really mattered enough to not end up collecting dust on my shelves. It had become all so repetitive. I mean, sure, that was to be expected after some time, but fundamentals taught me that there was no such thing as a boring experiment. I'm starting to think that the people who wrote the fundamentals didn't know what exactly an experiment was.

My gaze slowly turned back to the file I had begun rummaging through. A research report that had begun reviewing Y-626. A concoction I had put together to divide the molecular structure of Yinyang in an attempt to make them two separate entities. It had proven successful, but with disastrous consequences. Subject 2, known formerly as Yang, managed to destroy anything in his path with brute strength, and ate a man alive. While Subject 1, known formerly as Yin, seemed to be just about your average wholesome object. While horrific, the damage was not very long lasting. The arena was repaired, and no one seemed to care about the fact that Dough had gone missing to gods know where. It was.. interesting to watch, to say the least. I looked over each vital I had managed to

grab, and tilting the paper slightly to match my angle. A definite difference.

I set the page back down and sighed, crossing out the last few lines of the report with a scowl. Nothing. Nothing of use anyways. There would be no way for me to be able to get them back down here anyways. As twisted and stressful as it was, I liked seeing the consequences of my 'harmless' experiments. It was amazing to see how objects reacted to things under certain situations. Social experiments were one of my favorites to run. Everyone was always so.. different, even if they seemed similar in personality. Their reaction to stress, the adrenaline, it was fascinating to me. Sure, it made me feel like I was going to explode, but what is a momentum without recoil?

A flash of inspiration struck me, causing me to knock all of my files and notes off my desk. I frantically picked them back up, repeating the details of the idea in my head so that I wouldn't forget them. After a few minutes of meticulous organizing, I threw open my notebook and grabbed the nearest writing utensil. Pen, pencil, marker, didn't matter at this point. With a smile on my face I began writing down the bare details. An experiment where objects are stuck with nothing but eachother for an extended period of time. Would they grow closer? Drive eachother apart? Find a way to "escape"? It was perfect. This was social science. Something that would be beneficial to all forms of anthropology and psychology. This was my step to contributing something everyone would be able to learn from. I held the 626 folder to my chest, quietly thanking it before slipping it back into the abyss of other recorded projects.

All it took was six hours, two notebooks, seven pens, and two highlighters to get everything planned out. I was ready.

I know just who to call.

2: Do you think you can help me with Something?

Narrative P.O.V:

Test Tube has been writing and planning for around six hours. **Six Hours.** But finally after all the planning, it's complete. She sets the notes down, but it's more like a folder. The beginning paper reads *Experiment 21: Panic, or Fight?* . Beneith the heading, there is a small paragraph of planning and explanation. *Experiment 21: A solid white room, nothing inside. Just the glass window I can watch them in. I already added an Intercom, so we're ahead of schedule. All I need to do is get them inside....*

LightBulb's P.O.V:

I fiddle with my pillows in boredom. Nothing fun happens around here anymore ever since the show ended! Eh whatever. *Buzz, Buzz.* I shoot up off my bed and over to my desk faster than Testy can solve 2x2. I grab my phone up quickly, hoping it's Painty. Instead, It's Test Tube. Cool. I open the Text.

ScienceIs42:Hey, do you think you could help me with something?

Ooh! A new project?! I always love those!

BrightestBulbInTheShed: Totally! What's up?

ScienceIs42: I'm starting a new experiment, and I need you, Paintbrush, Fan, and Marshmallow's help.

I set my phone down, rereading the text again. Marshmallow? I could've sworn those two haven't even talked. Weird, but I'm weird

all the time, so I guess it must be a good thing!

BrightestBulbInTheShed: Relax Testy, I got this. I'll send out a group text, so it's easier.

ScienceIs42:You....Promise?

That's a weird question. Like, really super more weird than me question. And that's saying a lot. Now I'm suspicious, but okay. It's Test Tube, I'm sure it's fine....right?

BrightestBulbInTheShed :Of course I promise! Tomorrow?

ScienceIs42:That'd be perfect, thanks.

BrightestBulbInTheShed:No prob! See you tomorrow!

Guess I have a event tomorrow now. I'm excited!

Test Tube's P.O.V:

Thank goodness, she wasn't suspicious. Then again, it's Lightbulb. Well, things are going to plan. I really hope this works, but it'll be hard. Fan's Phone is his life, he won't give it up. I'll let him keep it...I have a better plan.

(A/N:Hope you Enjoyed! Sorry it's so long)

3: So it Begins.

Narrative P.O.V:

A group text was sent out 10 minutes later.

BrightestBulbInTheShed:Hey Bright Lights! This is mainly for TallArtisticSarcasm, Blog'tillYou'reDead, and Fluffy,ButPoisonious. Test Tube needs out help with a project, so I'm wondering if you guys are free tomorrow.

TallArtisticSarcasm:I'm free tomorrow, but why?

BrightestBulbInTheShed:I dunno Painty, you tell me.

Blog'TillYou'reDead: Anything to help Test Tube! I planned an anime marathon, but this sounds way cooler!

Fluffy, ButPoisonious: What's an Anime?

BrightestBulbInTheShed:Not Important, you free tomorrow?

Fluffy, ButPoisonious: I'm supposed to clean my house....I don't see why not.

BrightestBulbInTheShed:Yay! I'll tell Test Tube

ScienceIs42:I already know. Group text, remember? Anyway, thanks everyone. I'll see you tomorrow at 4:00 pm.

Everyone:K

The Next day

Everyone files up to the soda machine, and Fan presses the order code in. The get swooped in one by one, and land orderly in front of

Test Tube. "Welcome" She said, grinning. It was more of a mad scientist grin than anything, but only Paintbrush and Marshmallow noticed. She walks up to them. "I'm going to need any form of communication you have with you, along with any entertainment." There was a gasp from the back.

Fan's P.O.V:

Is she crazy?! I can't just give up my phone, It's my life! So that's exactly what I said.

"Are you nuts, I can't leave my phone!" I yell angrily at her. She just smirks at me. "You can keep it, but if you have any entertainment, please hand it over." I watch everyone groan and hand their phones over. Lightbulb hands over her entire bag. "I keep a lot of stuff in there" she replies, shrugging as a can of Fish Food falls out. I gawk at her, and pretty much everyone else does too. I keep my phone in my back pocket. It'll be safe there. Test Tube places all the stuff in a box and sets it on her desk. She waves her hand and turns around. "Now, follow me down the hall, and **DON'T TOUCH ANYTHING.**" That last part was a bit firm, but we follow. Now I'm concerned....and maybe more than that.

Lightbulb's P.O.V:

I skip happily behind everyone else. I wonder why everyone seems so nervous. I mean, sure, the ambiance is super creepy, and she took most of our stuff, but at least it seems fun. I'm still wondering what she needs us for. Probably something super cool!

Marshmallow's P.O.V:

Okay, this is getting a little creepy for my tastes. It looks like a hospital down here, and every few steps there's a room with a number. I wonder how many people she even has down here.....wait don't think like that. We'll be fine, right? Test Tube isn't a physco, just a scientist. It does remind me of home though, with all this dust and weird lighting.

Paintbrush's P.O.V:

I'm starting to think coming here was a bad idea. Marshmallow looks really self conscious, Fan seems nervous, I'm worrying about them, well more of Marsh, and Lightbulb is just being Lightbulb. I wonder how she stays so positive like this....I bet it's her trust. She's the only one who **isn't** suspicious. At least I think. Wait....I think we're stopping.

Narrative P.O.V:

The group stops in front of a glossy oak door. The plate on the door reads "Room 21" and on the wall next to it is a viewing window. It's a solid white room with nothing in it as far as can be seen. On the other side is another viewing window in a dark office. Everyone just stares at the room fearfully, even Lightbulb. Test Tube stares back, then speaks. "Welcome to Room 21, the project you've been assigned. I need to do a checkup first, then you may enter the facility."

Everyone stares at her, and Lightbulb begins to shake. "Y-You mean we signed up for that? How long will we be in there?" She holds a fearful expression, and grasps onto Paintbrush. For the first time, Paintbrush doesn't flinch or yell. They just let her be. Test Tube winces. "Yes, this is the project. You will be here for as long as it takes to get results. You promised, Lightbulb." Everyone turns to her in disbelief. Fan just narrows his eyes at Test Tube, and Marsh turns on Lightbulb. "You mean **YOU** are the one who got us stuck here?!" She shrilled angrily. Lightbulb flinches back. "Hehe...Yeah. I didn't think it would be this bad!" Test Tube rolls her eyes, but still feels guilty. Just a little bit though. "Are you all done? While you were yelling I took vitals and such. You now may enter." She creaks the door open, the light of the white room making everyone flinch. The group glance around wearily, looking for escape, but found none. Here they were, trapped underground.

Defeated, they went into the room single file.

4:Trapped

Narritive P.O.V:

The second Marshmellow stepped into the room, herself being the last one in, the door shut. Everyone turned around at the sound, and heard the door lock. No one said a word, but they were all thinking the same thing. *We are trapped here forever.* Lightbulb sat down immediately, and began to chatter her head off, rambling about fish and Monopoly. Paintbrush listened the best they could, but the rambling chatter was seemingly challenging to their temper. Marshmallow just turned back to the door, trying to get it unlocked. Fan paced around the room trying to get a a signal of anything. Nothing. No food, No entertainment, No water, No signal. Just each other, in a blank white room.

Marshmallow's P.O.V:

I'm starting to worry. Not because the outside viewing window is locked and the door too, no. I'm worried about Paintbrush. They keep oddly twitching at Lightbulb, and we've only been in here for about ten minutes. I give up on the door, and sit down next to Chatterbox Magee and Paintbrush. I slowly put my hand on theirs, as a comfort sign. A "Calm down, stay cool, we're fine" sign. Nothing too drastic, of course. It seemed to work, because when they noticed, they relaxed. I actually decide to listen to what Lightbulb is talking about. "....And then There was a huge *Swoosh*, and the game board and pieces when everywhere! Even Baxter went flying! I swear, I'm still missing the cat piece to my board. What did I learn from this? Never be Painty's landlord, or play Monopoly." She laughed merrily. I tilt my head oddly at her. How could she so....so....Positive?! We are trapped in a room we all are probably going to die in, and she's over here just laughing about Team Game Night! I sigh collectively. Of course, No one can hear what I think, I hope, so it just seemed like a sigh of

boredom. Then, a sound went off. A crackling sound, I toppled into Paintbrush, who followed suite into Lightbulb, who then tripped Fan. It was like a life sized Domino game.

Fan's P.O.V:

It's Impossible to get a signal here! All the girls have piled up into a corner. Wait....Never mind, Paintbrush is a boy too, right? Ugh, I don't need to think about this today. I just need a signal so I can google "How to escape creepy lab room". Then next thing I know, I trip over something and I'm toppling to the floor. I yelled of course, then face planted into the hard tile floor. We all quickly looked around for the cause of this. I saw it first, and pointed it out. "Guys, Look! It's a speaker!" We all turned our heads to look at it, then noticed That the one and only Test Tube was staring at us through another viewing window. Paintbrush reacted quickest. "Test Tube?! What are you doing?!" They charged at the window, but it was about two feet taller than them. So they hit the wall instead. Test Tube's voice came on via speaker. "Oops, forgot to mention a few things. Number 1:We are around 50 feet underground. That means no service." She turned her head to look at me. Then for the first time since my fall, I look at my phone. Cracked screen, but nothing else. "*Number 2: I will be able to hear and see what all of you do. It's a behavioral experiment. I will give you food and water as well. But you will stop getting food after two weeks, since you already have a lot."* She looked at Marshmallow, and we are stare at her with fear and disgust. Once again, Paintbrush speaks. They sneer at Test Tube, clearly ticked. "You want us to eat her?!" *"You either eat her eventually or starve, hate to say it."* Test Tube did indeed show a look of pain in her eyes, showing she was still humane. I felt....sorry for her. But at the same time, I hated that she was doing this. *"Hope you guys sleep well, It's around 9:00. Lights Dim at 11. Goodnight.*" She sighed, got up, and walked out of view. Paintbrush kicked a wall.

Paintbrush's P.O.V:

I CAN'T TAKE THIS ANYMORE! First, Lightbulb has to go be an idiot and draft us all into whatever this place is, then Stupid Physco Test Tube says we have to eat Marshmellow or starve?! The people

here! And Lightbulb..... She just Won't. Shut. Up. I'm really tempted to slap her or yell to make her shut up, but at least some of us are happy. Then I notice it's silent. I look down. Lightbulb is passed out on the cold tile ground of the room. A feeling of dread sweeps over me. I don't like it silent. At least, not as much as I thought I did. Then I hear small snoring. Fan's asleep too. Leaving just me, and Marsh. I scoot, well more of crawl, over to her. She seems....distant. Her eyes are fogged, so clearly she's thinking. I give her a small push. "Huh?" She snaps back. "O-Oh. Paintbrush. It's just you." "Yeah, it's just me". I look at her. She's terrible at hiding how she feels. "How you liking our new home?" I ask, trying to distract her. "It's....okay? I liked Purgatory Mansion better. It feels empty without Lightbulb's constant chatter, you know? Her words are like furniture. Soft or harsh, small or big, and always so much of it. But it makes wherever you are feel like home." She was fiddling with her hand, and poked some of her fluff. I look at her sympathetically. "Yeah, I guess you're right. But she does need to learn to shut up sometimes. I told her never to talk about Game Night again" I chuckle quietly. I literally caught the carpet on fire, and all Lightbulb did was laugh and put it out with fish water. While I was thinking, apparently Marshmellow had leaned into Me. I let her stay like that. It was...comforting. I guess....this whole thing....isn't too bad....

The Lights Dimmed as Paintbrush fell asleep.

5:Crack

Several Days have passed since the beginning of the experiment. So far, everyone's physical health is perfect. Some subjects show more tics than others, but that is to be expected. No hierarchy for food or space yet, so that's good. No physical infighting. That's good too. I am worried for Subject 4 and Subject 1 (Their numbers correspond to the order they walked in. Lightbulb first, Paintbrush Second, Fan Third, Marshmellow Fourth). Their mental health seems to be deteriorating, but I have no solid proof. It'll be hard to prove anyway. Log Date:1546.

Narritive P.O.V:

Many days have past and the group has adjusted to their new surroundings. A few arguements over the last sweet potato, but other than that, things functioned perfectly. Lightbulb is still chattering non stop. She is like an endless library of stories. Paintbrush is still voice of reason and make sure everyone sticks to the schedule. Fan is just typical Fan, still siding with Test Tube, and watching her as she watches them during the The day. Marshmellow is quiet. Quieter, but other than that, still the same. They all carry a similar trait though. They are all homesick.

Test Tube's P.O.V:

I slide down into my office chair. It's not time for any of them to be awake yet, so I can take notes and such. As I reread them, I notice behavioral changes in 1 and 4. I mean Lightbulb and Marshmellow. 1 isn't as....chirpy. She seems to shut up a lot more when I approach or when we make eye contact. She also no longer tells jokes or is as silly. Sure, she's still silly, but not as much. Now onto 4. 4 scares me. She is quiet, but firm. I feel like that quietness is the result of

physiological damage, or it's just something I've never noticed. I glance back down at them. .... What am I doing? These are my team mates....my friends. I'm keeping them locked in a room like animals, like lab rats. Am I losing my mind in this Lab too, or is it my humanity? Breath Test Tube... Breath. Remember the cause. We're doing this to get answers. Science is always the answer. And When you want answers, you have to be willing to sacrifice. Science waits for nobody. Even if it means we all die down here....I'll have a perfect record of it for the history books.

Timeskip to about 5hrs later.

Marshmellow's P.O.V:

I slump on the wall. Echo, Echo, Echo. Chatter, Chatter, Chatter. Pace, Pace, Pace. The same thing, every day. It feels like we've been in here for months. The noise, it lingers. While I sleep, While I breath, when it's supposed to be silent. Just that continuous echo of laughter in my ear. I hate it. I want it to just stop laughing. Then I turn to Lightbulb. I realize, she's laughing now. Is she the voice who taunts me? Taunts me with the optimism I want back? I realize the answer is yes, yes she is. She taunts all of us. Laugh, Laugh, Laugh. Smile, Squee, Optimistic. She has what we don't. Pleasure. It hurts...It's unfair. How can she be so happy? This is where we are going to die. I narrow my eyes at her, then realize.....Lightbulb is made of glass.

Glass can Break.

If it Breaks, No more Taunting.

Perfect.

6: Freeze and Fix

It has now been a week and three days. So far, nothing bad has happened. But 4 has been awfully quiet. She refuses to speak to anyone, and her vitals have slowed down. I'm worried she may have gotten Strep or gone mute due to the situation. Strep is the worse of the situation. I'll quarantine her later on today. Fan, er- 3 has finally given up on looking for a signal. He took the longest to give up hope. Maybe it has to do with gender ratios? I'll do a study later. 1's chirpyness has returned, which is comforting. 2 is still remaining their simple state. Note: Do a blood withdrawal to 4 in a day. Log Date:1547.

Narritive P.O.V:

Everyone sits around the room enjoying simple bread and honey sandwiches and bottled water. They chat as usual, Marshmellow only slightly conversing. She spent most of her time staring at Lightbulb, who never noticed. She was busy rationing her food. She tore her sandwich in half, and set it in her pile of food and water. She started doing this because she knew they only had four days until they stopped getting food. Fan is typing away on his phone, writing about nothing.

Marshmallow's P.O.V:

She doesn't suspect a thing. She's just chattering away, continuing to mock me. I'm waiting until everyone stops eating and settles down. I wish the echo would leave me alone. When I tune back in, I realize Paintbrush and Fan are laughing. Laughing with her. She gave them the one thing I still can't have, even though it's clearly temporary. Screw this....I can't take it.

Narritive P.O.V:

Fan and Paintbrush laugh at Lightbulb's terrible pun about Bread, when they pause. They notice how twitchy Marshmellow is, even though her eyes are clouded with thought. "Marsh, are you okay?" Paintbrush began, when suddenly she lunged at Lightbulb. She was still laughing so she didn't see it coming. Being shoved down onto the floor made her gain a small crack. "Wha-....Marshy?" Lightbulb held a dire expression of fear. Clearly Marshmellow had no mercy. Lightbulb saw this and got up, starting to run. She tripped over her food pile. Marshmallow caught her, then slammed her into a wall. Mainly, then viewing windowsill. That itself knocked a medium sized hole in the side of her head, not to mention tons of cracks spreading across the right side of her face. The sound of glass breaking and cracking was sickening. Marshmellow stood over the now unconscious form of Lightbulb. The twisted part about it? She was smiling. Small bits of blood leaked from Lightbulb's cracks. The others backed away in horror, trying to avoid a similar fate. Marshmallow was clearly about to strike another blow when the door to the room slammed open, then shut, locking whoever came in. This made Marshmellow snap back and pause. "What was that?" She asked, before her expression froze and she collapsed on the floor. In her arm was an empty syringe. The figure who stabbed her? Test Tube herself.

Test Tube's P.O.V(Ten minutes earlier):

I watch my subjects carefully. Marshmellow is clearly sick or going mad. I can see it in her eyes and actions. I've noticed Lightbulb has started a rations pile. Should've known she was too smart for that timeframe. I'll make a note for next time. I begin to write it down, when I hear glass shattering. I look down through the viewing window, and I gasp. Marsh has attacked Lightbulb. I throw my notes down, grab the room key and an anesthetic, and rush down there. Luckily, I make it there before she kills Lightbulb. I unlock the door, rush in, quickly administer the anesthetic, and it does it's work. Both

Fan and Paintbrush stare at me. Fan pipes up quietly. "Is she dead?" He asks fearfully. "Which one?" I question. "M-Marshmellow." He replies, clearly shaken. I laugh, which makes Paintbrush give me an even worse glare of disgust. "Heavens No! I just temporarily knocked her out. She'll be up in two hours." Then Paintbrush walks forward. "Well, what about the woman who was just shattered to bits?! She's going to die!" Their hair sparks up, and I step back. I look at Lightbulb. Large Hole, many cracks, bleeding. Unconscious. Could be worse. "She isn't going to die, she just took a lot of damage. It's an easy fix, if you have the missing piece" I suggest. Paintbrush walks over to Lightbulb, cringing at her condition, and picks up a loose shard of yellow glass. "Here." They said, handing me the piece grudgingly. "Thank you. Now, to fix things" I walk over to Marshmellow. Before I take my syringe, I draw some of her blood. Task Complete. I turn to Lightbulb. "I need to go get a cart for her. Keep a close eye on her, alright?" Paintbrush nods, and Fan just stares in fear. I grab the blood filled syringe, unlock the door, shut it, and relock it. I heard the sigh of disappointment when the door relocked.

Paintbrush's P.O.V:

I can't believe it. Marshmellow just went completely ballistic on Lightbulb. Not my everyday rage like fire ballistic, but attempt to **murder** her, ballistic. Lightbulb's barely breathing, which worries me. I glance over at Marshmellow, who's unconscious. It's like she's taking a nap. That would've been cute, if she hadn't just tried to kill someone. When I look back at Lightbulb, I feel horrible guilt. She only brought us here for fun. All I've ever done is yell at her. I feel the salty sting of tears. No....I refuse to cry here. Not in front of Fan, not in front of anyone. I learned that lesson a long time ago. I just wipe my eyes and keep watching Lightbulb, just like I said I would. Then....that memory resurfaced.

Me and Lightbulb were just sitting in our team cabin. Lightbulb had been sitting silent for the past hour. Then, she turned to me. "Painty... can I ask you something?" I glanced up from my phone. "Sure, what is it?" I replied seriously. I took note of her expression. This was a serious question, which is odd for Lightbulb. "If...something happened to any of the Bright Lights...would you blame me?" I study her expression. Then I think of the

question. One on hand, of course I would. She's our leader, her job is to keep us safe. But on the other, she's only one person, one optimist. So I went with honesty. "It honestly depends on what happened" I said, staring at her. I've always liked her unnatural eye color. Blue-grey was uncommon umong objects. She takes a deep breath, and speaks. "Well, I promise I'll do my best to protect you, and our team. But also let us have fun!" She chirped, half serious, half smiling. I grin slightly, knowing she's fine. "I promise that too" "Pinky swear?" She asked, holding her hand up. "Pinky swear" I said, my finger meeting hers.

Why...Of all memories, must I remember that one? I failed her....But now I have a new goal. Protect her, and our team at all costs. Even if that means risking fun, or risking my life. I'm going to get us out of here.

Fan's P.O.V:

Well that was down right terrifying. Not only did Marshmellow lose it, Lightbulb was severely injured! And Test Tube herself had to come in here and stop her! I have to log this down on my....phone. My phone...It's dead. I have no charger. My phone is dead, and I have no charger. This is it. This is how I'll die. In a blank white room with an unconscious corpse without communication. I curl up, hoping Paintbrush won't notice. They clearly don't. Good.

Test Tube's P.O.V:

I can't believe this.... this helps my study so much! I think as I walk down the hallway. The lights flicker, but it's only because of how deeply underground we are. I grab a medical cart, set the syringe down on the corner of it, and roll it back down the hallway. *That was your friend. You let her get hit. You are a monster.* I-I didn't say that....or think that. Where did that even come from? Not important. I open the door back to the room, and Lug Lightbulb back onto the cart. She's a lot heavier then some may think, despite being made of glass. Either that, or it's the fact I have no muscle from lack of exercise. I take one last look at my participants. Paintbrush is watching me with

Lightbulb's cart, Fan is curled up on the corner, and Marshmellow is still unconscious on the floor. Could be worse. I roll the cart out the door, and shut it, locking it back. No sigh of disappointment. I roll Lightbulb down a lighter hallway, and into my machinery repair room. This'll work. I gently place the glass shard back onto where it belongs. I turn to a shelf in the room, put on my metal working mask, and grab a blowtorch. Now all I have to do is melt the glass back together.

(A/N: Oof, this one is long. Sorry about that! This chapter is dedicated to @CloverThe3rd thanks for reading! Hope you enjoyed)

7: I'm Not Sorry. But She is

Sorry if today's log is short, whoever is listening to this. Yesterday, an "accident" happened. I don't blame myself, nor do I blame the subject responsible for the injuries acquired. Subject, more of Patient 1 is making fast recovery. The wielding was a success, but will leave scars when the glass fused and possible side effects. I'll keep an eye on her. Subject 4 is still unconscious. I may have gone a bit overboard with precautions. I'm sure she'll wake up any minute. Subject 3 has lost interest in his one piece of technology. It probably ran out of battery. For the past few hours, Subject 2 has been glaring at Subject 4. I wonder how that'll go.

Lightbulb's P.O.V:

Ugh...what even happened? I think I fell off my bed again. I'm surprised Painty didn't wake me up by now. It's probably 9:00am by now, and I'll be late for breakfast. Oh well, I'll just have my fish food. I tried to open my eyes, but that hurt. So I repeated the attempt, just slowly. It took a little while, but the room around me filtered back. The glance down at the bed I'm in. Itchy cotton, brown. It smells like blood and mothballs. This isn't my room. HOW DID I GET HERE?! I try to sit up, but I can't. Headache. Horrible Headache. Like, I just got whacked in the head by a brick headache. Someone approaches me. Test Tube! Of course, I get excited seeing her. She'll know where we are, she's super smart! "Testy! Thank Poseidon, can you tell me where we are? This isn't Camp." I noticed she held a much more grave expression than usual, and she was writing things down. "Clearly gained Amnesia...." she muttered quietly. "Oh right. Yes, this isn't camp. This is the medical recovery room. In my lab." I stare at her, puzzled. "Lab? What la-..." I start, then I remember. That white room. The sandwiches waiting for me. Marshmellow throwing me against the wall. Painty. Flat face. They're stuck here too. And it's my fault. I broke my promise. My eyes dull at the sudden guilt. "Oh...right. This

lab" I reply dead-pan. This definitely took Test Tube by surprise. She recovers quickly. "Are you feeling well enough to return to your room?" She asked quietly. "N-...actually, yeah." I started on no. There was no way I was going back in THERE. But then I remembered Painty and my Sandwiches waiting for me. I remembered Flat-...wait, Fan I think, waiting for me to tell him jokes and screw around. So I said yes. Test Tube raised an eyebrow at my response, but helps me up. Stupid. Headache. "Come on, it's a short walk" she said, leading me down the dim hallway. It's almost as if the lights react to me. When I'm dull, so are they. I trudge slowly behind her. She stops and turns around to me. "Are you sure you're alright?" She asks, still unsure. "Of course! I'm always okay!" I force a smile, but it seems so real Testy can't tell the difference. She just nods, and leads me back to room 21. She takes out a necklace, and on the end of it is a key. She unlocks the door, and leads me inside.

Narritive P.O.V:

"Guys, Lightbulb is back." Test Tube called out into the room. Fan sat up quickly, and Paintbrush nearly toppled Test Tube over trying to get back to Lightbulb. "Lightbulb! Oh thank god, I thought you died!" They cried, hugging her. "Chill Painty, I'm good. Just a tiny headache, so watch the squeeze" Lightbulb replied happily. Well, more of tiredly. Paintbrush releases her, then studies her. They gasp when they get a better look. Almost the complete upper right half of Lightbulb's face was covered in crack shaped scars. The missing glass Piece had been wielded back in, so everything else was normal. Her right eye was a bit more grey than blue, but she still had perfect vision. Lightbulb spoke quietly. "It ain't too bad, right?" Paintbrush sighs, and smiles slightly. "Of course not. You're still perfect." Lightbulb laughed, and Paintbrush keep the 'I don't care about you, but I do' act. Fan walked over, caught sight of Lightbulb and stepped back. Then he turned to Test Tube. "Um, Test Tube, can we talk?" He asked, skeptically. "Sure" she replied, walking them away from the other people. "What do you need?" She asked. "It's about Lightbulb..." He replied quietly. Test Tube winces. "Look, I know it seems horrible and all, but at least no lives were lost, I-..." Fan cut her off. "That's the point! She could've died! Marsh could've died! We all might die!" He

flailed his arms drastically. Then he sighs and calms down. "What I want to know is....what am I to **you.** Am I a test subject, or a friend?" He locked eyes with her, as if testing her. "Fan I-..." She stammers, thinking. "I don't know. Marsh should be awake in 15 minutes." "That's what you said last time" He complained. "Look, Lightbulb's back. I need to go finish a blood test." She replied, looking around nervously. Fan rolled his eyes as she walked out the door. "Sure...." He said, as the door closed. The second it closed, someone snapped awake.

Marshmallow's P.O.V:

Ugh...why do I feel like I've been frozen for 36 hours?! I sit up stiffly, trying to let my eyes adjust to the light of the bright room. White...room....oh right. The Experiment. My Attack. They probably think I'm insane. I probably am insane. Either that, or I caught schizophrenia. Is that something you can catch? I glance up, and notice Paintbrush standing over me with a not-so happy expression. It's their signature sparking glare. "What. The. ****. Did. You. Do?!" They exclaimed, their hair sparking. "I-....I just...I just couldn't take it!" I yelled back. "She was mocking us! With Positivity!" Paintbrush just stares at me with a confused glare. "You are insane." They said. The turned around and I expected them to walk away. But instead, they turned back, slapped me, and then walked off. That's one hope out the window. Fan was stared at me with fear and sympathy in his eyes. Finally, the one in the back stood still. Lightbulb. I cringed in guilt and awkwardness. "Hey....Lightbulb". I said quietly. She held a dull look in her eyes, like she's hiding something we shouldn't see. "Just so you know," She sighed quietly. "I'm not mad at you" I glance up at her. How could she not be mad? I tried to kill her for Pete's sake! "Y-You're not mad?" I asked, stuttering. Stupid guilt stutter. Stupid Voices. Stupid, Stupid, Stupid! I internally facepalmed, and waited for her reply. "No...I'm not. I shouldn't have pushed your buttons or whatever caused you to attack me. I'm sorry. " I cringed harder. She blamed herself for my actions. Just like any humble person would do. "Lightbulb...I-.." I began to speak, but noticed she had already walked away. But instead of sitting with Paintbrush, she sat alone in her corner of food. That isn't good.

Many Hours Later, Still Marshes view

I hate how quiet it is. It reminds me too much of Purgatory Mansion. Purgatory makes me think of Bow. Bow makes me Think of Apple. Apple makes me feel homesick. I wish...I could just go home. Hear Apple trying to make breakfast or tell jokes with Bow. Watch the, both nearly burn down the House for the 40th time. I think of what Apple would think about this.

Aw cheer up Marsh! At least we have each other!

Why don't we try drawing with the dust on the ground, or tell spooky stories when the lights dim?

I wonder what we'll have for breakfast. I hope it's something delicious! Whatever delicious means, anyway.

I cringe, feeling guilty of just leaving her behind. I remember when I found her again

"M-Marsh? What are you doing here? Why'd you just break a window?" She asked, clearly excited and frightened. "I'm here for you, dumb-dumb!" I called up to her. "Oh okay, lemme just-.." She started to climb out the window. She was on the seventh floor. "No, Apple, wait!" I cried, and ran to catch her. Catch her I did. Well more of she used me as a trampoline or mattress. "Sorry!" She squeaked. "It's fine, I'm used to it" I replied, swiping dust off of me. "So, what'd you want me for anyway? I thought you hated me" She said, looking down sadly. "Apple...I'm sorry." She glanced back up. "What?" "I said I'm sorry." I repeated. "I was so horrible to you, and it wasn't even your own fault...and...and..." I looked down to the ground, tearing up. Suddenly, she just hugged me. "Don't worry Marshy, I forgive you. Whatever Forgive means"

Then we went off to live in Purgatory. I wonder what it'll be like when she sees me again... if she ever does(A/N: Sorry Marshy, She won't.)

Narritive P.O.V:

It's been about an Hour since the lights have dimmed, and Lightbulb

is still awake. She found the buzzing of the dimmed lights comforting and distracting at the same time. Neither of which helped her headache. She rolled over, and saw Paintbrush was still awake. "Hey Painty?" She whispered. Paintbrush sat up, wondered who said their name. "Painty, it's me, Lightbulb." They sigh. "Oh right, yes?" They reply nonchalantly. "Painty....how long will it be until we die here?" She asked gravely. "W-What?!" They exclaimed in a dire whisper. Then they calmed down. "I don't know. I hope we don't die here at all." "But what if I want to?" She asked quietly. Paintbrush turned to look at her. She was tearing up, and still held full eyes. "Lightbulb, you can't be serious." They replied quickly. "It's just an idea. I already broke my promise to keep you guys safe, my head hurts all the time, and we are going to die here anyway. Why can't I just... let this go quickly instead of spending my time suffering?" Paintbrush felt terrible that she thought this. They scooted over to her, and layed down next to her. "Lightbulb,never let me hear you say that again. You aren't going to die here and you aren't going to try to die here. The people in this room still need you, promise aside. You are the only comfort, only true 'light' we have here. If not for us...then for me" They met eyes and Paintbrush grasped her hand. "Please" They said direly. Lightbulb sighed, and scooted onto Paintbrush. "Fine Painty...I promise" she said, and then fell asleep. "Good" Paintbrush replied, and followed soon after.

(Ugh, that took awhile. Enjoy the Feels Trip you didn't sign a permission slip for!)

8: Lies

Log Date:1547. Things have been going well for the subjects. 1 is still numb. I wonder if that's a personal choice or if it's been caused? Maybe Personal Interaction would help? I've already visited them enough....I'll come back in a few days. Three days until food rations are cut. I'll be nicer and give them more Non-perishable foods. Sounds good....Sounds good. Subject 4's vitals are back up, and she's back to functioning normally. Good.

Narritive P.O.V:

The group sits around, eating the halves of sandwich Lightbulb had saved. Lightbulb poked her sandwich a bit, then ate it, unable to resist. Delicious sandwich. Everyone else agreed. Better than eating Marshmellow. Everyone has pretty much forgiven Marshmellow.

A few hours later

Lightbulb walks up the everyone, grouping them in a circle on the floor. "What's the point of this?" Paintbrush asked. "It's a fun game" Lightbulb replied simply. Paintbrush did their "Weird Eyebrow thingy" but did indeed sit down. Fan sat next to Paintbrush, and Marshmellow next to Fan. Then Lightbulb proceeded to sit between Marshmellow and Paintbrush.

Lightbulb's P.O.V:

Ooh! Everyone's going to love this game! Even if I've been in low spirits, that doesn't mean they have to be! So this game is mainly two truths and a lie. The goal is to find out what the lie is. Easy peasy, right? Hopefully nothing goes wrong this time.

Narritive P.O.V:

Lightbulb explains the rules of the game to her group. "Easy, right?" She asked, grinning. Fan raised his hand quietly. "Yeah Fan?" She replied. "So we can lie about anything, but there has to be at least one truth?" He asked simply. "Absolutely! Anything and Everything goes, as long as there is one truthful statement." She chirped. "Any other questions?" She asked. Everyone shook their heads. "Good! Who wants to go first?" She looks around. No one speaking. "Fine. I'll go first, since y'all are too chicken." She flaunts her hips, specifically looking at Paintbrush. Their hand twitches a bit, but they collect themselves. Lightbulb gains a disappointed look. "No? Okay then. Number 1: I've once eaten Rat Poison and Lived. Number 2:I have a crush on mostly Everyone in this room, and others"She winks subtly, and everyone laughs. "Number 3:Baxter has two cousins named Bob and Barry." She finishes. "So..." She said, her eyes shifting from each member. "What's my lie?" She asked. "I'd say Number 1. That's Impossible!" Fan exclaimed. "I'd have to say Number 2. It's not very likely, now is it?" Marshmellow replied. Fan took that into consideration. "You're right! Can I change my answer?" Fan asked quickly. "Yup!" Lightbulb replied. "What about you Painty?" Lightbulb turns to them and asked. "It has to be Number 3. It's obvious." They roll their eyes.

Lightbulb's P.O.V:

Ooh! I should've known Painty was too smart for me. But if I say that Number two was my truth, I might ruin my friendship with everyone. So I just lie about my lie. "Actually Painty, Marshy and Fan were right" I said quietly. They look at me, clearly surprised. Fan pumps his fist and High-Fives Marshmellow. Paintbrush examines me. They know I'm lying, but they don't say anything about it. "Alright Fan, your turn." I said quickly

Fan's P.O.V:

Oh I guess it's my turn. I say it's pretty smart of me to get the first round right. But it was obvious. Like, hit you in the face obvious. Hmm....let's see... Oh I know! "Okay then" I said "How's

these....Number 1:I've tried Online dating and ended up dating a dog. Number 2: I've once stayed up from 8:00pm to 8:00 am doing an Anime Marathon.(A/N:Haven't we all Fan?) Number 3: I've actually been popular in school" Paintbrush burst out laughing at the last one, and Lightbulb and Marshmellow snicker. "Hey!" I yelled. "It's not funny" "Yes it is!" Cried Paintbrush, who was doubled over laughing. "I'd go with Number 1, just to be nice" Lightbulb said sweetly. "Number 3, Sorry Fan" Marshmellow snickered. "I second that notion" Replied Paintbrush, who was still laughing on the floor. "Too bad. Lightbulb got it right. It wasn't a dog, it was a cat." Paintbrush immediately stopped laughing and sat up. "You were popular?!" They gasped. "Yeah" I replied. "For having the most Manga in the school." Lightbulb's eyes lit up, and Marshmellow couldn't help herself from laughing. Paintbrush just stared. "Okay, if it's so funny Paintbrush, your turn." I said challengingly

Paintbrush's P.O.V:

So little red Flatface challenges me to play a kiddie game? Fine. I can do that. "Fine." I said, standing up. "Number 1:I've actually burn the Tent down just because I stubbed my toe" "Pssh, that's obviously true Painty. I was there" Lightbulb claims. Ugh, right I forgot. "Number 2: I've actually tried painting my nails." "Woah, really?" Marshmellow asked. "The point is to guess Marshy" Lightbulb replied. "Oh! Right, sorry" She covers her mouth with her hands, turning a light pink. Cute. "Number Three: I have never, ever, actually attempting self portrait painting" "That one is actually pretty believable" Fan replied. "I'd say Number 2, since I live with you, and I've never seen that happen" Lightbulb taunted. I ignored her taunt, and listened for the other answers. "I say Number 3, because you're too never too tall for a canvas" Marshmellow said, still a bit pink and laughy. "I'd have to say the nails thing, you'd never do that. Ever." Fan stated. Looks like Marshmellow wins. "Marshmellow is right. I've actually done a self portrait painting. I just trashed it cause it sucked." I shrugged. "I don't think that's entirely true Painty. I would've liked it" Lightbulb said with a hint of disappointment. "Well whatever, it's Marshmellow's turn" I said.

Marshmellow's P.O.V:

Guess it's my turn. Lightbulb clapped. "Yay, we're almost done!" Then almost the second she clapped, the lights dimmed. "Nuts!" Lightbulb yelled. "Guess that means lights out" She said, and she walked over to her little sleep corner. "Maybe we'll play again tomorrow." She said, yawning and laying down. "I second the sleeping notion"Fan replied, stretching and yawning, walking over to his corner. I heard his quiet snoring, so I knew he was sleep. Paintbrush was lying down, staring at the ceiling. I heard them quietly muttering "I promise...., right" I walk over to my corner, and lie on the ground. I draw in the dust, just like Apple would've wanted us to. I draw a small apple, and then fall asleep.

(A/N: This one took awhile, but it's finished, yay! Enjoy)

Bonus Chapter: Music Box

(This story will be entirely of Lightbulb's perspective. Thought it'd be a fun filler.)

I'm a good fake sleeper. So good, that I fooled myself into sleeping.

I wander around a garden. It's the same one I brought Painty to a couple of years ago. I was 16 I think. The garden was filled with Yellow Daisies, Dandilions, Daffodils, Sunflowers, and forget me nots. I loved this garden because it was mostly yellow, with the hints of blue from the Forget me nots. I laughed. "Hey Painty Look, you're short for once." I point to the 10 foot sunflower. The Sunflower had about three feet on them. "Shut up" They said laughing, and gently shoving me. We walked together for awhile, till we found a field of pure dandilions. I ran through them, sending seeds everywhere. In the air, on the ground, on my glass, everywhere. In in Painty's bristles. They eventually caught up with me. "Slow down you goof." They said. "Sorry Painty! This place is pretty, ain't it?" I asked them quietly. The sun was setting across the flowers. "Yeah, I suppose it is. Come on. It's going to get dark soon, and Test Tube will Be worried." They grabbed my wrist and semi-dragged me out of the field. As much as I wanted to stay in the garden, I couldn't. But Painty didn't drag me home. They dragged me into a pitch black room and disappeared. There was a small music box on a table in front of me, but nothing else. I wind the music box up, and it plays a sweet melody I swear I've heard before. Then when it ends, it all goes white.

I sit up, hoping to be in the Cabin, Or Tent, or at Home. But I'm back in this white room. I want that garden back. I want that music box back. I want "my" Painty back. When they weren't so serious. But I can't have any of that. I can only accept the small changes. Changes...wait. The lyrics! I remember the lyrics! I sing quietly to myself. "*Let's go in the garden, you'll find something waiting, right there where you left it, lying up-side down. When you finally find it, you'll see how it's faded. The underside is lighter, when you turn it around.*

Everything stays, right where you left it. Everything stays, but it still changes. Ever so slightly, daily and nightly, in little ways. Everything stays~" I finish softly. I had only been singing to myself. I wanted the feel the fluffy seeds, the velvety petals, but all I had was the song. I suppose that's good enough. I don't know why, but somehow I had started crying. As if I was watering the flowers. Why the flowers need water, I don't know. It's still very nice of me. I breath, and roll over, trying to go back to sleep. I can't let Painty see me crying again. They'll get too worried. Then, I find a state of zen, humming the tune to myself, and fall back asleep. I wonder where I'll go this time....

(A/N: First Bonus! I'm in love with with one. I used "Everything Stays" from Adventure time, knowing it'd Fit.)

9:Actions Speak Louder Than Words

(A/N:This is going to be a long one)

Log Date: 1548. The Subjects yesterday discovered a new form of entertainment. It was a fun game to watch, and I was tempted to join in myself. I did notice some "suspicious" behavior from 1 and 2, but other than that, things went off smoothly. I've already sent down about three bags of chips, two water bottles, and a bag of tortillas. That should prove useful. Thought, I did notice something else. When I was replaying the audio clip for last night, one of the subjects was awake at around 12:47am. Not only were they awake, they were singing. I suppose it was 1, as it matched her Pitch, but I'm not completely convinced. Then, at around 12:52am, they supposedly went to back to sleep, or stopped making noise. Oh right....Today's blood withdrawal. 4 doesn't need one, since I already have a sample. I really hope they don't resist. It'll make things harder. We'll just see.

Narritive P.O.V:

Everyone woke up at different times, but all of them ate together. They noticed Lightbulb and Marsh seemed to switch personalities. Marsh talked a lot that morning, and Lightbulb said barely anything. Fan and Marshmellow were discussing time travel, and Paintbrush was observing Lightbulb. She wasn't visibly sad, she just seemed...distracted. At least she was eating again.

Paintbrush's P.O.V:

Lightbulb is starting to scare me. She's quiet again. She's usually the

chatty one, but today, it's Marshmellow. I wonder what perked her up. I glance over at Lightbulb. She's just staring at the floor while she eats. I haven't forgotten what she promised me, and what I promised her. She worries me too much. I know I should focus on other things, like how to get out, or how much food and water we have...but, It's Lightbulb. Surely I'm not the only one worried, right? I look at Marshmellow and Fan, who are talking about calculators and time stuff. They aren't worried, it's like they forgot we're trapped here. I guess it's just me. I guess it's just...I've protected her for years. She's not exactly the best life liver or saver, so someone had to do it. You know what, I'm going to ask. "Lightbulb" I said, trying to catch her attention. She stared at the ground for a bit, but then my voice registered. She looked up. "Oh! Yeah, Painty?" "What's up?" I saw her smirk a bit. "The ceiling." I facepalmed, but under my hand I was smiling but also concerned. She's putting on her front again. "No, not literally. You're acting odd again." I saw her expression fall a bit, but she pushed it back up. "I'm fine Painty. Just thinking, that's all." She replied, holding a smile. I noticed the corner of her face twitch. It's forced. "Lightbulb, quit-.." I began, but I knew saying that would make her insist more. I sigh and tried a different approach. "Lightbulb, just know if you need to talk to someone, I'm still here" She stared at me, holding an expression that almost said 'I'm not sure you can help me'. "Thanks Painty" She replied, and then joined the conversation about time travel. Better, but not good enough.

Lightbulb's P.O.V:

I could've sworn I hid it better. Man, that dream screwed me up big time. I didn't really want to talk to Painty, but there wasn't much I could do. All I can do is try to convince them I'm fine. I'm good at that. "So like I was saying, Surely Time Travel must be an exciting experience." Fan stated. I made a face. Time Travel was fun yes, but altered Salt died, Test Tube has a breakdown, and I learned even with an Altered Perfect Personality, It's not as perfect as I thought. To be honest, it was fun for awhile, then it got scary. I'm not sure about Marshmellow's opinion though. "Yeah, I can say it's exciting, but not very fun" I replied. "I watched someone die, so that's pretty cool" I looked down. "Well, for me it was okay. Not very exciting, or fun, but

it was cool. I wish Walmart still sold those things." Marshmellow said, clearly trying to change the subject. "Oh. Well it's good to have both sides of opinions on this topic." Fan replied. " Wish my phone was still alive so I could save the info" He glanced over at the dead, cracked phone. Wait, I can fix that! Hopefully. "Hey Fan, could I try something?" I asked him swiftly. "Um, sure?" He replied. I picked up the phone, then shocked it. The screen came back on with the phone at 30% battery. "There we go, one semi charged phone" I said, handing him his phone back. He squealed, and ran off to his corner to type like a madman. Classic Fan

Fan's P.O.V:

I can't believe it! Lightbulb saved my phone! Now I won't be bored for the rest of eternity! I wonder how many times it'll work. Anyway, I pull up my Google Docs, and record our conversation, and the past few days. I may have no signal to post it, but atleast I'll have it for when I get out of here. Plus, it'll help us as a group learn about each other. I think that may be why Test Tube put us in here. (A/N:It's not.)The second I said that, the door opened, and Test Tube entered the room. I wonder how that worked out.

Narritive P.O.V:

Everyone looked up from what they were doing , and saw Test Tube locking the door behind her. She had a satchel with her, filled with who knows what. "Greetings Everyone" She said calmly. "I forgot to mention this, but around every two weeks I need to do a blood withdrawal to make sure you are sick." "I think you're sick in the head" Paintbrush glared. "You speak boldly to someone who could kill you in three seconds" Test Tube replied with a challenging glare. She reached into her bag, and pulled out an empty syringe similar to the one she stabbed Marshmellow with. Lightbulb saw it first, and began to scream. Needles were not her favorite. Test Tube covered her ears and waited until Lightbulb ran out of breath, which took about two minutes. "You done yet?" She asked snarkily. Lightbulb nodded quietly, still eyeing the needle. "4, you don't need one, since I

took one while you were unconscious" "Four? Who's Four?" Marshmellow asked. Test Tube facepalmed. "I ordered you by the order you came in. Lightbulb is 1, Paintbrush is 2, Fan is 3, and you are 4" She explained. "It's easy that way" Marshmellow stared at her skeptically. "Good to know" She said, backing away.

Paintbrush's P.O.V:

Here we go again. This honestly is a repeat of every time I've had to take Lightbulb to the hospital. Mind you, that's a lot. She hates shots, and I'm sure she'll kill to get away from them. Which isn't good, since here, everything goes. I step forward. "I'll go first" I said, with a shaky breath. I don't like needles either, but if it's means Lightbulb doesn't have to go first, I'll do it. "Good. Now just hold your arm out, and don't resist. It'll make things easier for both of us." Test Tube replied. I noticed she was holding this sickening smile. Does she enjoy this?! Ugh... I hold out my arm like she instructs, and the jab feels **WAY** worse than if you'd get a shot from the doctor. I can feel the blood draining out of my arm, so I just turn my head so I don't have to see it. I heard a small gagging noise from the back. Probably Marshmellow. She hates blood, in any form. Which is confusing, since she purposely made someone bleed. I feel the needle pull out of my arm, so I look back. "Done" Test Tube said cheerily. "One down, two to go." There is definitely a mark where she stabbed me, and a small dot of blood. Ugh.

Marshmellow's P.O.V:

I forgot blood makes me sick. I'm glad I had mine done when I was unconscious, but I still feel horrible that the others have to have this happen to them. I mean, sure, It sounds a little Bi-Polar, but I think it's the room. I'm Homesick, Headsick, and now I'm sick to my stomach. Since I don't have anything to do with this, I'm just going to turn around and sit down. This just makes me feel worse. Ugh, why the heck would anyone do this? It's Inhumane, and certainly not legal! I mean, how would you even get a permit for Object Experimentation?!

Fan's P.O.V:

I really hope she goes in "numerical" order. I don't want Lightbulb to start screaming again, it was a horrific sound. I really hope I never have to hear it again, but I probably will. "Alright, next is Fan since he's three. I'm going in numerical order here." I walk up slowly, hoping she doesn't down right stab me like she did with Paintbrush. It was definitely violent, I can agree. I hold out my arm, shaking from anticipation. But instead of a jab, it's more of a soft poke. Did she go easy on me on purpose, or did she just have multi-violent tendencies? She drew my blood slowly, and I swear I'm going to faint. Now, I'd prefer to have it drawn quickly. I look up at her. She just looks at me, clearly content. She's doing this on purpose. Finally after what seemed like hours, she called "Done!" And pulled the needle out of my arm. I stumbled backwards. That was horrible.

Lightbulb's P.O.V:

Oh great...now it's my turn. From what I've seen, this isn't going to be fun. I'm to end up screaming or crying, I swear. "Lastly....Number 1. May not be in complete order, but some of our fears aren't exactly useful" Test Tube narrowed her eyes at me. It's like I'm frozen to the ground. I slowly step forwards, every step feeling like I have cinder blocks tied to my feet. Paintbrush keeps a heavy gaze on Test Tube, twitching at the arms. They would strike if she hurt me too badly. That was comforting, and concerning. I hold my arm out to her hesitantly. A vicious glint shows in Test Tube's eyes. She jabs me, and of course I scream. Paintbrush flinches, Fan covers his ears, and Marshmellow attempts to hold Painty back. Guess I owe her one. I try to control myself, telling myself not to scream. I probably look and sound insane. "Done" Test Tube said quietly. I hadn't even noticed that the needle was out of my arm. "T-That wasn't too bad" I said blankly. This seemed to make Painty relax, so Marshy let her go. Fan uncovered his ears. "I told you"Test Tube replied. "The fear was irrational, I just stabbed you to see what happened"

Narritive P.O.V:

"YOU DID WHAT?!" Paintbrush screamed. "Okay, maybe that's a bit far for a behavioral experiment" Marshmellow commented. "That's the whole point of a **behavioral** experiment. To see how people react to certain situations" Test Tube said calmly. "SO YOU'RE JUST GOING TO TORTURE US HERE UNTIL WE DIE?!" Paintbrush yelled. They clearly aren't calming down, and their hair is sparking red. "Pretty much" Test Tube shrugged. This time, Paintbrush caught fire. The embers literally went everywhere, and one of them hit Marshmallow. The scent of burning sugar filled the room.

(A/N: Cliffhanger, >:3. Hope you enjoyed)

10:Ash Bells Ring

Log Date: 1549. Busy, can't write. Incidents are more frequent, currently dealing with one. Maybe if I had been more careful with my studies, we wouldn't have lost a subject so early into the experiment. It's not even been two weeks. I should be more careful. Note to self:Travel Overground to get Fire Extingushers and better medical supplies.

Narritive P.O.V:

No one noticed until Marshmellow began to emit a high pitched shriek. "Guys.....Guys! I'm smoking, I'm smoking! Guys?!" She yelled. Only Lightbulb noticed. Paintbrush, Test Tube, and Fan were still arguing over safety and Humanity. Lightbulb, who was much louder than all of them except Paintbrush yelled. It was a loud sound, that made everyone freeze except Marshmellow who now had a small flame on her. "Guys, Marsh is burning?!" She motioned to Marshmellow, who was trying to pat it out. Paintbrush stood staring in horror, Test Tube had darted out the door, running down the dark hallway to try and find a fire extinguisher. Fan kept yelling at her to drop to the floor and roll around, but Marshmellow's high pitch shrieking made her unable to hear him. Lightbulb ran out after Test Tube.

Test Tube's P.O.V:

I can't believe I was so careless! I was more intrigued at interaction, I completely forgot about abilities! Now Subject 4 is on fire. I need to find a Fire extinguisher quickly. I hear footsteps following me, and turn around. There behind me was Lightbulb. I was just as surprised to see her as she was surprised she was caught. I stared at her, then yelled "Don't just stand there! Go check the medical ward!" She nodded and sprinted off in the opposite direction. I ran into the mechanical repair room, hoping to find something, anything!

Nothing. If It wasn't here, and wasn't in the medical ward, she's hopeless. Hopefully Lightbulb finds something....

Lightbulb's P.O.V:

Stars....this isn't good. I only have a few minutes. I hate time limits. I reach the room, fighting with the door to get it open. Forget this... I kick the door down. It was easy since the door was quite old. I burst into the medical room. It still reaks of blood and heavy scent of dirty cotton. I dig around the drawers, the cabinets, and check the floor. Nothing. "No...." I mutter quietly. "No, no, no, no, no, no!" I grabbed onto the side of a cot to keep myself steady. She's certainly going to die now. And It's my fault. My fault for having a stupid fear, my fault for driving her crazy, my fault for bringing her here....It's all my fault. I-.....I-..... I still have one promise to keep up. I can't disappoint Paintbrush again. I guess I'll just have to face defeat... I climb over the dropped boxes and drawers, and out the door. But not before I take a shard of metal, and stab myself in the arm with it. I grab a cotton swab, and then run down to Room 21.

Marshmellow's P.O.V:

I'm burning....I'm burning! Oh....Someone help me! Where did Test Tube and Lightbulb even go?! I try to pat the fire out, but the excessive patting just makes the fire spread up my arm. I hate this burning feeling....bad memories ensue.

"Jeez Apple, I thought after months of being isolated on Idiotic Island, you'd be warmed up to Marshmellow by now" O.J remarked. As I began to walk away, she grabbed me, holding her arm around my neck. I struggled against her, since she was choking me. She grabbed a lit match and held it above my head. "Oh, I'll warm her up alright!" She yelled as she dropped the match onto my head. I screamed, and O.J dumped a cup of water on my head. I hyperventilated , trying to calm down from the situation. O.J turned to Apple. "You know the rules Apple." He stated. "No fires in the Hotel!" He looked past Apple, and noticed Balloon spraying Paint onto the wall. "Hey! Quit Vandilizing the Hotel!" He yelled, shoving Apple aside

and running towards Balloon. I stared up at Apple. We locked eyes for a brief moment, then I ran away.

Her smiling face popped back in my head. "*Hey Marshmellow! I drew us!" She said, holding up a small doodle of us holding hands. The only problem was that the names were spelled wrong. "That's nice Apple" I said. "But you spelled our names wrong" She facepalmed, and crumpled the drawing up. "Oh, not again!" Me and Apple were just sitting on the lawn of Purgatory Mansion. The moon was full, so Bow and Dough were out somewhere scaring people. We were stargazing. "These are pretty" Apple said, pointing up to the stars. "What are they?" She asked me. This would be a better question for T3#5 57/e, but I decided to answer it. "Well Apple, those are stars. Big pretty balls of flaming ice, rocks, and gas." "How come they're so big if they look so small?" Apple asked. "It's perspective" I replied once again. "What's Perspective mean?" She asked, clearly still confused. "Perspective means the way you see something. With your eyes, or with your heart" I stared at her, hoping she'd understand. She clapped her hands together, though it took her awhile. "Ooooh! I get it." She flopped back down onto the grass. "Then the perspective of my life is perfect." "Why's that?" I asked jokingly. "Because I have Purgatory, Bow, Dough, and you!" She said, smiling at me.*

I'll never see her again.....this is how I die. I realized that while I was remembering, Fan had starting screaming at me. "DROP! DROP! YOUR LOWER TORSO IS BURNING!" He screamed. I looked down. There was the fire. It has spread down my arm, and up to my middle. Then came the searing heat. I instantly began to shriek from the pain. The room was growing blurry. Fan was becoming quieter. Paintbrush was standing over me, their face blurred from heat. "I-....I'm sorry, Marsh" They said, tears resting on their cheeks. I felt the searing heat reach up to my face. It was unlike anything I've ever felt. It hurt worse than Apple "betraying" me, It hurt worse than the voices words, it was horrible. I shrieked as loud as I could, hoping atleast someone could help me. But I couldn't see, I couldn't hear. My voice grew horse, or ran out, because next thing I know....It's dark and quiet.

Paintbrush's P.O.V:

I have done this to her. I did nothing but watch her shriek, and watch her burn with the fire I made. I made that fire, I made her fate.

Actually, I didn't make her fate. Test Tube did. She may have put us here to die, but I know I'm going to live. I have to. I have to get out of here, before someone else dies. I felt a sharp sting, and then noticed tears streaming down my face. Silently. The echo of Marsh's final scream still echoed around. All that was left a small fire, burning her remains. Fan was far enough away to not catch fire, but still sobbing. I knew Marsh was his favorite, so this must be hard on him. I turned around, hoping he hadn't seen me crying. Crying is a form of weakness....and the last thing I need is to be weak again.

I was sitting down, smiling. Trophy, one of the newest contestants, walked by me. He stopped, looked at me, and smirked. "Hey Gender freakshow, What's with the smile?" I glance up at him. "Huh?" I asked. "You're smiling like an idiot. It makes you look stupid, you know. Just like the idiot you call a Team Captain." I stood up. "She's not an idiot, she's my friend!" I said loudly, trying to control my temper. "Think about it Gender, she really is. She can't find her way out of a paper bag, she eats literally anything, and is only concerned about holding power. Sounds like a tyranted idiot to me" He said, smirking. I look over at Lightbulb. She has a paper bag on her head, and was struggling to get it off. I realized how incompetent she was as a leader. I realized that she rubbed off on me. If she was weak like that...then I was too. "Looks like I made my point. Maybe you should do the leading for her" Trophy said as he walked away.

So I listened. And that got me along just fine. Now someone has died for that method. I wonder where Lightbulb is now.

Lightbulb's P.O.V:

I stopped in front of Room 21. I heard a horrible shrieking noise. I cringed, Marshmellow. I took the cotton swab, placed it on my arm, which was rapidly bleeding, and began to write. It took only a few swatches of blood to finish, but it worked. I noticed I had stopped bleeding too. I stood back and looked at my work. The door read "Panic Attack". The "paint" had begun running down the door, as anyone's blood would. I took a shaky breath and walked inside. Fan was sobbing in front of a dying fire. It was burning off of ashes. Probably Marsh's. I looked at Paintbrush. Clearly from their shaking,

they were crying too. I shut the door and heard it lock behind me. No one seemed to care. I walked over to my corner, and put my head on my knees. I waited to start crying, but I didn't. I just felt....numb. Why? I heard the door unlock, and Test Tube stepped in behind me.

Test Tube's P.O.V:

I gasped seeing the door. Someone had written "Panic Attack" in blood. It must've been Lightbulb, since no one else was out here with me. I wonder how she even began bleeding. No matter...I heard the shriek. Marshmellow was dead. *Be sure to log that down later*. I slowly put the key in the door and unlocked it. In the middle of the room was just a glowing pile of ashes. Most likely what remains of Subject 4. 3 was sobbing, and a part of me longed to comfort him. But there was no way I could. It's been too long for me to remember. 2 was shaking in their corner, so they were either Traumatized or crying. Probably both. 1....wasn't crying. She was staring numbly at the ceiling. How...odd. I left them to their state, and locked the door back behind me as I left. I walked back into my office and dimmed the lights early. They deserve sleep, especially after this. Maybe I'll keep the food drops for a little while longer.

(A/N: OoF. This hurt me to write, and it took ages. But it's complete. Hope you enjoyed, despite the first death. Sorry to any Marshy fans *No pun intended, I'm sorry that came out wrong*)

11: I don't care anymore

Log Date:1550. Finished filing down the loss of Subject 4. Now we have 1, 2, and 3 left. 3 seems to have taken the most mental damage, for he has yet to recover. No, scratch that, 1 took most mental damage. She has yet to show any emotion since 4's death. Maybe all that interaction was bad for her. Either that, or she's just been unstable since the beginning. 2 has attempted to spark something from 1, but all attempts have proven failed. 3 converses with 2 more often. They now just leave 1 to herself. Hopefully she'll fix herself eventually. I've sent down food already. That's all for now, I may report again later on 1.

Lightbulb's P.O.V:

I should nap, but I don't want to. I should eat, but I'm not hungry. I should drink, but I'm not thirsty. I'm tired, and miss home. I want to go back that garden, I want to go back to when Marshy was alive. I've always wanted things, but I can't always have everything I want. But these things should be easy. They aren't. I just lay here on the tile floor, waiting until someone or something tries to get me to eat again.

Paintbrush's P.O.V:

Fan isn't as bad as I thought. He's pretty okay at conversations, but the second I mention home he instant launches into a half hour rant about how the camp was built and weird unrelated stuff like that. "So that's why I say the teams should've stayed, what about you?" He asked. I was back to looking at Lightbulb. She hasn't said anything to anyone since Marshmellow died. Speaking of which, her remains are still here. We just swept them to the side to forget about them. I should've done something...Paintbrush don't think like that. You're

smarter than this. You couldn't have done anything if you tried. Back to Lightbulb. I don't think she's eaten in a few hours. "Paintbrush!" Fan yelled. I snapped back. "Huh? Oh right. I say it was a good choice to make solos, even thought I was eliminated in that episode" I said quietly. Fan looked in the direction I was. "Oh....Your concerned for **her**, aren't you?" I nodded. "Alright. Let's go see if we can get her to do something." Fan said. We both got up, and walked over to her.

Fan's P.O.V:

Okay. Maybe we have been ignoring Lightbulb a little bit. But she's resilient. She can't let death stop her, considering it's inevitable. Well, considering she's an optimist, that probably was a really hard blow. She still needs to pull herself together anyway. "Hey Lightbulb" I said. No reaction. She just stares at me blankly. I glance nervously at Paintbrush and nudge them forward. "H-Hey Lightbulb" They repeated. Still nothing. I'm done. "I'm sorry Paintbrush, but she's hopeless. Try all you want, I have a catalog to date." I said, pulling out my phone and walking off.

Lightbulb's P.O.V:

I watch Fan leave. He's given up on me. Great. They just don't know how to get me to talk, do they? I switch my gaze back to Paintbrush. Hopefully they haven't given up on me. "Don't mind him, he just doesn't try hard enough, eh?" Paintbrush laughed. "He tries plenty hard, I'm just hopeless" I said blankly. "Oh hey, you talk!" Paintbrush jokes. I stare at them. "Sorry, Sorry." "Paintbrush, can I ask you something?" They seemed shocked that I called them Paintbrush instead of Painty. "Sure." They said, studying me. "Why did you change?" "What?" They asked back, Confused. "You heard me. You changed, I didn't. You used to be so fun to be around. Now all you do is call me stupid and yell your head off. What happened?" I said, lowering my gaze. They fell silent. "I knew it. You don't have a reason. You just...changed. That's stupid." I said angrily. They still stay silent. "I know you didn't come over here to talk to me. Why did you come over?" "Because it's been around five hours since you've

eaten." They replied. "Oh right. I didn't notice" I said truthfully.

Paintbrush's P.O.V:

Okay, that's not where I wanted this to go. She's being stubborn again. That's stupid, just like she said. "Lightbulb, you need to at least eat something. You're going to starve." "Does it look like I care?" Lightbulb replied blandly. "We talked about this" I threatened. "I know! I'm not as stupid as you think I am!" She yelled. Fan looked up from his phone, then went back to typing. "The reason I'm not talking, or eating, or any of that is because I don't care anymore! Marsh died here! If she died here, so are we! There's nothing we can do, so what's the point?! Test Tube wants us to react! She wants us to do something! So I'm doing nothing, even if it's means I die!" She screamed, and then sat down. I expected her to start crying, but she didn't. She's grown further away from everyone. Numb. That's not good. I heard her start humming to herself. I walked away to my corner, leaving her to her own.

Fan's P.O.V:

I can't sit back and just write about this. I need to do at least something history worthy while I'm here. I walked over to Lightbulb. "Look, I know things are terrible now, and it's pointless to do anything..but...don't you think there's a bright side to this?" I asked her. "How could there be. We are all going to die here" She replied dully. "Well, there are a few things. 1: It's better than dying alone. 2: We got to know each other better, and probably will keep getting to know each other. Now you make three, okay?" I asked, hoping she'd atleast do something with me. She nodded. "Three....um....Well, I get to talk to all of you instead of just being all sad by myself" I notice a slight smile on her face. I beam at her. "There's That signature smile!" She laughed, letting the smile grow. She studied me, gave me a small hug, and got up to head back to her corner. "Thanks Fan. You're better at this than Paintbrush. All they do is yell" She said as she left. I liked that hug. It was warm.

Lightbulb's P.O.V:

It's nice to know at least someone cares. Physical contact is rare, so it was nice of him to let me hug him. Maybe I should, you know, stick around. For him, and everyone. It's only fair, since I owe him. He may care about keeping me alive, but I sure don't. As for Paintbrush....I'm not sure. It's like they can't decide whether or not to care about me. Let them decide, I don't care anymore.

12:Missing

Log Date: 1551. Today might be a better day, since today's log Date is a number palindrome. Along with the coincidence, Today's the day I have to go shopping. Which means leaving the lab after about 7 months. I wonder how I'll react to sunlight. More things to note down when I get up there. New experience. Great.

Test Tube's P.O.V:

I'm excited and nervous for today. Today is the first time in seven months I'm leaving the lab. This is also the first time I'm leaving a project alone to themselves. I'm going to keep the intercom on, so it'll record all audio. I don't have any camera's though. I'll be sure to get materials to make some. I wonder how the group will react to this news.

Narritive P.O.V:

Test Tube walked over to her intercom in her office, tapped it, then turned it on. The group turned their heads up to look at the intercom in their room. *"Hello. I have some good or bad news for you today, depending on what you think."* "Well that's comforting" Paintbrush said flatly. "I'd say concerning, but to each their own" Fan replied. "Sarcasm, remember?" Paintbrush retorted. Lightbulb just stared curiously. "*Today I will be headed above ground for five hours, meaning I won't be watching you, and you'll be alone in this room underground.*" Test Tube said into the intercom. Lightbulb's eyes lit up, and Fan pumped a fist in the air. "Finally!" Paintbrush yelled. "*Now I expect no one to be injured when I return. The intercom will record any audio, so there's your warning."* She continued. "*Enjoy your free time"* She said, walking away from the intercom.

Lightbulb's P.O.V:

Yay! We get to do what we want! That means escape attempts! She only said no injuries, so as long as no one else gets hurt we can escape! This is great. I'll be sure to tell everyone else my idea.

Paintbrush's P.O.V:

Thank the holy mother of whatever, we finally aren't being watched. I was started to get tired of the "When it feels like you're being watched, and you are." Kinda feel. Fan was already running around the room cheering like an idiot. Lightbulb was excited too, but she defintely has a plan. I walk over to her. "So what's your huge plan now" I asked jokingly. "Well, I was thinking we could try to escape via the food drop slope. She said as long as no one gets hurt, we'll be fine" She replied grinning. "Oh. You're serious" I said catching her expression. "Of course I'm serious" She replied, still holding confidence. "Will you help me?" She asked me, grabbing my wrists. "Lightbulb, I see a problem in your plan." "What?" She asked again. I'm starting to think she's legitimately serious about escaping. If so, she's crazy. "Well for starters, none of us can fit through that hole except Fan, and there's no way he's Going to go against Test Tube." I stated. I noticed her face fall. "Second, That shoot leads into Test Tube's office. If anyone's will know about you going through their stuff, it'd Be her." I finished. "Oh" she replied. I honestly thought she'd try to do it anyway, like the old Lightbulb would, but she didn't. She just went off to chat with Fan.

Test Tube's P.O.V:

I walked down the dark hallway, and up to one of my elevators. I stepped in, and looked at the buttons. All of them were worn and dirty except the top floor button. I pressed it, and the elevator slowly went up. When I opened the doors, I flinched at how bright it was in the main lobby. I grabbed my satchel, which held my money because you can't shop without it, A box of old parts and inventions to sell, and a reusable bag to carry my stuff. Gotta save the ecosystem! I

climbed up the stairs, and reached for the doorknob, but my hand flinched back. Was I really ready to go back to society? Even just for a day? "You can do this Test Tube" I said quietly, then opened the door, and walked out the back of the Drink Machine. I hissed and flinched at the bright sunlight. I realized just how pale I really was. Another thing to add, Vitamin C or E pills. My eyes adjusted to the sunlight, and I walked out into the old gameshow's field.

The Team Cabins were still there. And so was the elimination grounds. Nostalgia Is a great thing. Too bad I don't have enough good memories for this place to mean anything to me. "Hey! Test Tube!" I heard a young sounding voice yell. I turned around and saw Apple running towards me. I cringed, remembering what happened to Marshmellow. "H-Hey Apple" I stuttered. "Jeez, you're paler than Marshmellow! At least...when I last saw her." I decided to play along. "Last saw her?" I asked fakely. "Where have you been! It's all over the news. Marshmellow, Lightbulb, Fan, and Paintbrush disappeared near the Vending Machine two weeks ago. I'm part of the committee to help find them, since Marsh was so close to me. So far we have nothing." She said, looking down sadly. "Well that certainly is odd, and very sad." I replied awkwardly. "You haven't seen her, have you?" Apple asked hopefully. I remembered Marshmellow attacking Lightbulb, Catching Fire, and her screaming. I hope I didn't pale, because if I did, I would've looked dead. "N-No, Sorry." I replied quietly. "Oh. Well tell me if you see her!" She chirped as I walked away,in the direction of the Convience Store and Flea Market. When I reach the Flea market door, I stop and look at all the posters on the windows. Missing posters. Missing Posters of my Subjects. All Sixteen of them. So Apple wasn't kidding when she said there was a committee. I walked through the door, and saw the cashier. It was Microphone from the Grand Slams. She looked up from her magazine and sat up. "Well if it isn't Dr. No-Show." She laughed. "What can I do for you today?" She asked merrily. "Um, a lot of things. I'd also like to sell a few things." I said, handing her my shopping list and my box of parts and useless inventions. "Wow Test Tube, that's a lot of stuff" She caught view of my box. "In both areas" she added.

She came back with all my stuff, and handed me the cash for my parts and such. "That'll be $175.25" She said. I looked at the large amount of stuff on the counter. "Shouldn't it be more than that? I

asked her. "Game Show and Science Bonus" She replied, pointing to the policy sign. Turns out both of them were on there. "Oh. Well thanks!" I said, grabbing my stuff, stuffing my bag with it, paying for it, and walking out of the store "Watch out for the Metal Kidnapper" She joked. "Metal Kidnapper?" I asked, actually Confused this time. "Yeah. We call them that since everyone who's missing went missing near the vending machine. At least, I call her that." "Her?" I said nervously. "Yup. There's been witnesses of the stuff, but their confessions are so wacky no one believes them" Should've been more careful....I'll come up with a new method later. "Good to know" I said swallowing and nodding. "Good luck Test Tube." She called as I walked out of the door.

Now I've gotten what I need, and can prevent accidents. Good.

(A/N: Hope you guys enjoyed this chapter, it was fun to write. The next chapter will be of what the "Subjects" did while she was gone)

13:Game Escape

Log Date: 1552. Apparently I'm not as safe as I thought I Was. There is an investigation community, and they're on to me. They know I'm a "She" and that I take my subjects near the vending machine, the thing disguising my lab. I'm going to start having to be more careful. I've gotten my supplies, so that's good and well. I'm debating on whether to writing Apple an informative as well.....she'd like to know if something happened, which it did. I'll report again later...Hopefully.

Test Tube's P.O.V:

When I return back to the deeper part of my lab, having already dropped off my stuff, I feel a disturbance. Something's changed, I can feel it. I rush down to Room 21, and notice not only is the Intercom completely fried, Subject 1 is missing. She's escaped. My question is how?! The door and windows aren't unlocked and she's too big for the Food Shoot. I'll question each one when I get in there. I unlock the door, and enter the room.

Paintbrush's P.O.V:

Well crap. Test Tube's back earlier than expected, and Lightbulb isn't back yet. I glance nervously at Fan, who looks just as anxious as me. Test Tube doesn't look furious, but when I get a glimpse of her eyes, man is there a raging spark. "I presume you two wouldn't happen to know where Subject 1 went, would you?" She asked in a deadly quiet tone. "First of all, Her name is Lightbulb. Second of All, if we did, why would we tell you?" I snapped at her. "Well, for starters, if you do, she'll have a higher chance of living. Second, I gave you specific orders not to damage anything. Something is clearly damaged." She said, glaring up at her intercom. "I-It was my idea!" Fan shouted. She turned to look at him, clearly surprised. "Oh really?" I noticed her begin to twitch. That isn't a good sign. "Y-Yes....I thought it would be a good time while you were away to get Lightbulb out of here. She

said she'd come back for us after she found a key" He responded nervously. "Well, it just so happens I keep the key with me. She isn't going to find one" Test Tube said bitterly. "I'll deal with you later. First, I need to find where she went" She walked out of the room, shutting and locking the door behind her.

Around Three Hours ago

Fan's P.O.V:

Maybe Lightbulb's idea isn't so bad, but Paintbrush is right. There is literally no way out of here. I pick up my phone, and boredly scroll through the apps I have. I've finished literally everything on here. Then my eyes fall on an app I downloaded about two years ago, when I was in my puzzle phase. An Escape Room app. Then an idea hits me. I'm in an escape room! Well, kinda. Maybe this could help! Since I haven't started yet, I'm not going to tell those two. I start up the app, and begin the game. It's so similar to my situation. Okay...this app is a lot harder than I remember. But I do notice that there is a vent on the roof. Maybe that'll help. I glance up at the ceiling. There's a Vent! I squeal so loudly, the other two turn to stare at me.

Lightbulb's P.O.V:

Did Fan just Fan-Squeal? If he did, that was the weirdest sound I've ever heard. I walk over to him. "What?" I asked curiously. "I...I found a way out!" He shouted, pointing to the ceiling. Paintbrush turns to look, and so do I. Turns out he was pointing to a vent. My eyes light up. I knew there was a way out of here! "Well how did we get up there?" Paintbrush asked. "Let me look"Fan replied, looking back down at his phone. "It says here we need to stack things up to get up to it, then rip it off" Fan added quickly. "That sounds easy!" I yelled, ready to get out of here. "I'll have you sit on Paintbrush's shoulders, and I'll climb up both of you up to Vent. Then I'll take it off, go through, find the key, and come back to get you guys!" I chirped happily. This is finally how we get out of here.

Paintbrush's P.O.V:

So...Fan, of all people, found a way out. We have about four hours until Test Tube comes back. Seems easy enough. I duck down low enough for Fan to be able to get on my shoulders. I hate the idea of this part, but if it's means we get out of here, I'll do it in a heartbeat. "Just so you know, we will never speak of this again" I growled. "Agreed" Fan complied climbing onto my shoulders. I straightened out. Fan's a lot lighter than I thought he was. Now, for the hard part. Managing to get Lightbulb up both of us. I walk me and Fan to nearly right under the vent. "Ready?" Lightbulb called. "Yup were good!" Fan called back down. She instantly began to climb up us. Her foot is sharp! I look down at my torso, noticing she actually left scratches in my wood. Gosh Dangit Lightbulb. She's gotten up Fan by now. She's working on the vent. "Got it!" She yelled, ripping the vent cover off throwing it on the ground. It hit me on the way down. Yet another scratch. Ouch. Before she pops out of the room, she speaks. "I'll be back for you guys later. Take care of yourselves!" She called, then climbed into the vents.

Lightbulb's P.O.V:

I made it! Now just gotta find my way to the main Lobby and get out of here. I crawl slowly through the vents. I just barely fit in here, but I can manage. Paintbrush and Fan are counting on me. This reminds me of a similar situation I've been in. As I crawl, I think. No wonder I wasn't afraid, I've crawled through vents before. When your house is on lock down, you need to learn escape methods.

"What do you mean we might die?!" Screeched Marshmellow. "I mean, we have a 25% Of living through this! And keep your voice down!" Paintbrush direly whispered back. It was more gameshow lock down, apparently someone went cuckoo and decided to attack someone. That Some attacker was Taco. I never thought of murder as an option, so I'd have to keep cool. On the inside, I was afraid of dying. I could break so easily, and I have so many things I haven' done. My only escape was the Air vents. As I headed up one I heard Fan yell "Where are you going?!" "I'm getting out of here!" I yelled back. I managed to call the cops and get us all safe. That just boosted my optimism. "Smile," I told myself "Because

you never know which day Is your last"

I stop at a vent intersection, and kick the floor below me. Of course, I drop, but not where I thought I would be. I landed myself in the generator room. I open one of the many fuse boxes, and see a wire and switch labeled "21 intercom". I know what to do. I rub my hands together and shock the wire. That should take down the intercom. The room also looks like a storage room. I dig around the drawers and boxes hoping to find something.

Back to Present

Test Tube's P.O.V:

"So you have absolutely no idea where she is, or what happened to the intercom?" I asked angrily. I had searched the entire bottom two floors. She wasn't there. "Basically. We just helped get her out of the room. No idea what happened to her or that thing" Paintbrush said, pointing to the intercom. I sighed. "I'll fix it later. And I'll find a Lightbulb later too. She made the mistake of escaping, Let her be lost. I have an informative to write" I decided that I was going to write Apple an informative, just so she knows. I walked over to the spot where 4's ashes sat, picked them up, bagged them, then headed for the door. "What are you going to do with those?" Fan asked quietly. "I'm sending them back to who they belong to" I replied quickly, leaving the room and locking the door behind me. When I reach my office, I sit down in my chair. I pull out a piece of paper and my printing pen, and begin to write.

I doubt you'll ever find out who this is from, but if you do, don't do anything about it. It's a hopeless case. I regret to inform you that while under Experimentation, Subject 4, more commonly known to you as Marshmellow, has passed. Here are her-

I can't do this.... My hand shakes and I'm trying to keep myself from breaking down. Apple cared so much about Marshmellow....It would break her heart to learn she died. Much less....from *murder.* She'd tell the committee, and then I'd be in big trouble. Not to mention, the fact that the longer I stare at this bag...the more terrible I feel. I

mean, sure, this is my job. I have a lisense and everything. But...Apple is a pure innocent. She's worked so hard to get Marshmellow back on her side, and to build a life for them. I ripped Marshmellow away from that life. If I tell Apple the truth, I don't think she'll survive. I throw the paper, Pen, and Bag across the room. I don't want to look at it anymore.

(A/N: The idea for this Chapter was given to me by @CloverThe3rd. Thanks By the way! Enjoy another cliffhanger >:3 Kinda.)

14: No strikes, You're Still Out.

Log Date: 1553. Apparently the vent wasn't secured well enough, and 1 escaped. I'll let her try to find a way out, which she won't. This lab has five floors, each with around 25- 30 rooms. If she finds a way to my office, there will be consequences. I'm started to get tired of watching them. It's a much harder task than I thought, along with they don't behave as well as the other subjects. I'm going to deal with 3 today. Hopefully no struggling, because I just want to fix things. Respect is gained by Fear right?

Fan's P.O.V:

I'm nervous. Test Tube's back, without Lightbulb. She said she'd "Deal With Me Later" so I have a reason to be. I glance at Paintbrush, who just stares hopefully at Test Tube. Test Tube has been staring me down for the past 10 minutes. She finally speaks, which just makes me tense up. "You know, I've been thinking. Maybe.... I've found a perfect way to punish you both" "Paintbrush didn't do anything- wait....you mean Lightbulb, don't you?" I glanced fearfully up at her. She just gives me a sly smile in return. "Of course, I just have to find her first. Or she'll find me." She walked out the door, and locked it behind her.

Lightbulb's P.O.V:

I walk around the hallways. I still don't see anything familiar. I'm super lost, so now what? I've got no key, nothing. Ooh! I have an idea! I'll just light up. I light myself, which allows me to see better. I stop near a door. It reads "Room 120" I notice the plate below it. "Main Office". Perfect! If the key is anywhere, it's here! I fiddle the door open, and glance around. No one's home. Perfect. I glance around, and see something on the floor. It's a pen, a bag with ash...., and a letter. I read it slowly. Test Tube was writing to Apple. I

cringe.... but I'm glad she didn't send it. I see the key sitting under a lamp. Wait, key?! Yes! I reach for it then I hear a voice behind me. "I suspected you'd find my office eventually" I jumped half a mile, and turned around. It was Test Tube. She was grinning at me. But it was a physco grin. I back up, but hit the desk. She grabbed my wrist and dragged me out the room. I reach for the key, but she pulls me away. "I don't think so. We have a task to finish" "What task?" I asked, still struggling to go back. She had a tight grip! She was leading me around, back to Room 21. "Well, you broke the rules. I have to punish you for it." She replied, reopening the door to Room 21. When she dragged me in, Fan was a pale pink in the face, and Paintbrush looked horrified. I glared at her. "So what are you going to do to me? Kill me?" She laughed physcotically. "Heavens no! I'm going to hurt your escapee" She said, turning to Fan. "And you're going to have to watch him suffer." I paled at the answer.

Fan's P.O.V:

Wait....did she just say she was going to hurt me?! I back away from her, but she just walks towards me. "Well, there are many ways I could hurt you. Which one would hurt her the most?" She asked, tilting her head to one side. "H-How about none?" I stammered, backing away. The more I walk away, the more she walks towards me. Paintbrush flinches. "You can't do this! It's physcotic!" They yelled. She didn't seem to hear her. Lightbulb runs in front of me. "Please! Hurt me instead, just don't hurt him! It's unfair!" She yelled, trying to protect me. "I understand it's your nature to protect your team, which is exactly why I'm doing this" Test Tube replied, shoving her against the ground. Paintbrush lifted her back up, and their hair sparked. "I wouldn't" Test Tube warned. "Remember last time? You've still got a quite flammable friend over here." Paintbrush growled and stepped back. Guilt and Rage sat in their expression. I can't move...I can't move! Wait...duck tape? I look at Test Tube quizzically. "It's to hold you down. Against the wall. So you don't struggle or hurt me" She replied. "Why are you doing this?!" I cried to her, hoping to summon my Test Tube from the depths of where ever she went. "It's for science Fan. I'm perfectly sane. This is just for my studies" She replied, smiling. I flinched, then she touched the edge of my paper. I

glance up at her worriedly "You wouldn't...." I said quietly. "Oh 3, but I would."

Test Tube's P.O.V:

They want to go against me? Fine! I'll play by their own rules. They don't want to want to play by mine. It took awhile, but using Lightbulb's mindset I think the best way to tor- er, punish her is to have someone she cares about be injured, and have her watch. Perfect....It's a good method. *You can't do this for much longer. You know she won't survive this....she's already seen enough. You need to stop.* I attempt to push my thoughts away. Lightbulb just watches fearfully from the floor. I grab Fan's edge, and slowly tear at the paper. I hear him whimper, but clearly he's holding to himself to not make Lightbulb feel too bad. About two inches to it, and the tissue has already begun to bleed. Not that I mind of course, just makes it all the more satisfying. Wait...did I just think that? I look back at Fan. He's trying to scream or cry clearly, and Lightbulb is already crying. I've torn him about four inches down, and I'm extremely close to his eye. He's not looking at me anymore. Just at the ground. I do it. I rip down to his eye. This time, he actually yells. I hear Lightbulb gasp and sob. Paintbrush glares at me. This time...I actually stop and look at the damage. He's bleeding at each tear, and I ripped straight through his right eye. "I...I can't see!" He yelled and struggled to get his arms free. I pull the tape off the wall. "That should be enough for now." I said quietly. Lightbulb was still crying. "I'm....so sorry...." she said to Fan. Paintbrush just glared at me more once, and patted Lightbulb on the back comfortingly.

I walk out the door, but not before looking at Fan once again. Next Time....I shouldn't be so hard on him.

(A/N: Behold, pure torture at it's finest. Sorry it took so long. Hope you enjoyed!)

Chapter 15: "Did she just curse at me in Spanish?!"

Log Date: 1554. It appears that punishment worked well on the two subjects. Hopefully now they'll-.....One moment. I just heard the elevator.

Apple's P.O.V:

Despite the committee telling me not to do it several times, I'm heading to the main site. I've got to find Marsh! She needs to come home, but Bow keeps telling me she can't. I'll show her who can't bring her home! Maybe I'll find the others, too. It feels so empty with hearing Paintbrush yell constantly. It was annoying sure, but comforting none the less. Whatever that means. I walk up to the vending machine. It's actually....pretty scary. I put some change into it, and press the button for a Dr. Fizz. Nothing. Then I press water. Still nothing. Is this thing broken or something? I press the buttons repeatedly, by now I'm tired of this thing. "Work you stupid-...woah!" I kicked it, and then this weird tubey sucked me up. I start screaming because I think this isn't what was supposed to have happened. I hit the ground. Hard. I get up, and look around. A weird lab lobby. Wait....isn't Test Tube a scientist?
Wait....Scientist....Lab....Kidnapping..... Marsh has to be here! Test Tube is the Metal Kidnapper! No way!

I run quickly up the the elevator, and see a highlighted button. I read it aloud. "Ellen-gator to Vroom 21? That makes no...oh that says Elevator." I said, facepalming. I should've paid more attention to Marsh's lessons. I press the button, and it moves. It makes me feel kinda scared. No elevator music or anything....just the whirring of machines and flickering of lights. I shudder, wondering how Marsh can live like this. The second the elevator door open, I'm greeted by

Test Tube. Seeing her makes me feel a wave of anger. I punch her backwards. "You physco! You kidnapped Marshmellow!" I yelled at her Angrily. I noticed I put a crack in her glass. She deserves it. "Yes, I did. Well now that you're here, you aren't leaving." She replied. "Well duh!" I yelled. "I need to get Marsh and the others out of here!" I saw her cringe and hold a grave expression, whatever that means. "Suure. Just follow me" Test Tube said dimly, grabbing my wrist tightly and leading my down the hallway. Man this place is spooky. It makes me want to just grab Marsh and get out of here. She led me to a door that had a gold plate on it that read "Room 21" below it, drippy red paint also read "Panic Attack". That paint is super scary. Test Tube unlocked the door, and pushed me inside. There in front of me sat Lightbulb crying numbly, Paintbrush looking up starting at me, and Fan trying to get himself to stop bleeding. He was ripped all the way down to his eye! I gag, and sit down. "Pretty sure you know her, this is Apple. She is a 'replacement' for Subject 4. I expect you to take good care of her" I tilt my head. Subject 4? Paintbrush gives me a look of pity, Lightbulb stares at me sadly, and Fan just keeps trying to keep himself together. Paintbrush walks over to me. "Welcome to Hell" They said flatly. I remember Marsh saying that word to me before in a not-so-nice manner, so I knew not to repeat it. "What's that?" I asked. Lightbulb spoke up this time. "A place of endless suffering and death with no escape." She said sadly, flopping over onto the ground. "Where's Marsh?"

Paintbrush's P.O.V:

I froze when I heard her ask that. Apparently, so did everyone else. Lightbulb sat up. "Well, who wants to tell her?" She asked bitterly. Fan stammered a reply. "C-Can't. Little busy right now" He said, pointing to his tear. "It's a lot harder with terrible depth perception" Lightbulb turned to me. "Well, I'm in no state to do it either. Looks like your going to have to, Paintbrush" She said sharply. I hate that's she's started calling me Paintbrush again, instead of Painty. It makes me concerned. I take a deep breath and turn to Apple. "Well Apple.....Marshmellow is gone. And she can't come back" I stated quietly. "Well why not?" She asked innocently. I cringe, hating that I have to tell her this. "Well....." I started, then Lightbulb spoke out of

turn. "It's because she died" she said dully, plopping back onto the tile floor. When I turned back to Apple, she was tearing up. Clearly she knew what "dead" meant. "Well..." she sniffled "What happened to her?" Lightbulb turned over to stare at me. "Yes, you'd be the perfect person to answer that." She said. I said nothing. I couldn't tell her it was my fault. "Nothing? Really?! Fine!" Lightbulb replied. "Marshmellow caught on fire and burned to death." She said sharply, not looking at Apple, but at me.

Apple's P.O.V:

Marsh is dead?! But she can't be dead, I haven't saved her yet! Now she's gone....I failed her! When I hear she burned to death, I was about to question it. But then I remembered...Paintbrush can catch on fire. I turn to them angrily. "You murderer! You killed her!" I charge them, and for once, I actually land a blow. Twice in one day, not too bad. But....I hit them in the face. Whoops. I see them begin to shake. "My fault?! MY FAULT?! IT WASN'T MY FAULT, I'M NOT THE ONE WHO GOT US TRAPPED DOWN HERE YOU DUMB FRUIT!" They screamed, sparks flying everywhere. Fan ran quickly to avoid them. Well, I'm dead. Literally. They lunged at me, punched me, when knocked me over. I hit a wall. I can tell I'm definitely bruised. I can here yelling coming from Lightbulb in front of me....and I can taste the sweet-sharp taste of my own juice in my mouth. Ugh.... I hate being a fruit. When I get back up, the room is spinning, and I hear something I've never heard before. A high shrilled scream. I look down, and notice a small grey patch where I'm standing. I'm standing where Marsh was....before she died. I slump down crying. I just wanted Marsh to come back home. I didn't want this.

Fan's P.O.V:

"Now look what you've done guys!" I yelled to Lightbulb and Paintbrush. They were arguing over who's fault it was to get us stuck here. Don't they know it doesn't matter? I motion over to Apple, who is bruised, cut, and crying. They stop bickering and look at Apple. I see Paintbrush cringe and Lightbulb's eyes dull. "You know what?"

Lightbulb said. "I'm done. I've had enough. I'm just going to sit in my corner and wait until I die" She said, walking over to her corner. "But you promised!" Yelled Paintbrush to her. "*Bueno, no todos nosotros podemos cumplir nuestras promesas, Que te jodan."* She replied harshly, then sat down. Paintbrush looked enraged and confused. "Did she just curse at me in Spanish?!" Both me and Apple shrugged. "I dunno, I only do Chinese, Japanese, and Korean. Don't do Spanish" I replied. "I don't know enough Spanish to tell you" Apple said. "Oh my- you know what, I don't care either" They said standing up and walking to their own corner. That just leaves me and Apple. She looks up sadly at me. "I-Is Marshy really gone forever?" I think really hard on that one. "Well...you'll see her again one day" I replied grimly. She didn't catch it, and her eyes light up. "Really?! When?!" She asked excitedly. "W-When....you die too" As I said that, I saw her face fall, and she just grabbed her knees. "How long until then?" She asked quietly. "I don't know" I answered honestly. Sometimes I wish I had all the answers, but now certainly isn't one of them.

Log Date: 1554.5 Apparently Subject 1 knows fluent Spanish. And how to curse in Spanish. Good to know, I guess. Apple has arrived, and is now subject 5. 5 and 2 got in a physical fight, which led to an arguement between 1 and 2, with 3 attempting to break them up. This ended out with Spanish cursing and a really ticked 2. 3 and 5 are bonding well, and everyone seems to have accepted the fact that they are trapped here. That's both good, and bad. Still useful for my studies though. Now 5 knows, so I won't have to explain.

16: Fruit Snacks

Log Date:1555. I just remembered that since we have a new food member, I can an enforce the two weeks rule. Excellent. I always enjoy this part of the experiment. I wonder if anyone will get food poisoning this time, if anyone does. What I do know is I've already sent down a note explaining the situation. I wonder if they'll stick with rations, or go straight up cannibalistic. Either way, it's still good to take notes.

Lightbulb's P.O.V:

Like I have been doing, I wake up before everyone else. I can't ever sleep anymore. Not with the constant fear of attacks, being watched, and baggage. I notice a slip of paper where our food should be. I pick it up. It reads "*Remember the 'Two weeks till no food? Well you have a food Object now. You can kill her now or save her for later - Test Tube"* I throw the paper down. "*Tienes que estar bromeando!"* I yell, and then turn to Apple. She's asleep.... but twitching. I notice how easy it would be to just...Lightbulb, No! Your not a cannibal, and you're not insane! You've just switched languages. "*Tal vez ella me dejariá si, si preguntara"* I said quietly. *You know, she probably wants to die almost as much as you do. She wouldn't mind any. Plus....No one would know it was you.* You're right creepy voice I can't see.

Apple's P.O.V:

I was dreaming peacefully, then I heard someone yell "You've got to be kidding me" so I woke up. It was in Spanish, so clearly it had to have been Lightbulb. I sit up, and see Lightbulb just staring back at me. It was dark, but somehow her eyes managed to glitter. "Que?" I asked. her suspiciously. "*Oh nada. Además, cara a cara, tengo hambre"* she replied. I only understood half of that, so I tilted my

head. Next thing I know, she's on top of me, and I'm screaming. She bites into my neck like some sort of vampire, and rips a chunk of my flesh out. The room blurs....and I only hear white noise....

W-Where am I?! I yelled, hoping someone would answer. Then, I saw her. Marshmellow. Marshy! I yelled, trying to run towards her. But I was stuck in place. "Well Apple, you're dying" Marsh responded calmly. "Does that mean i'll Be with you again soon?" I asked her quietly. She shrugged. "Pretty much" Yay! I yelled. "But you're going to have to go through the pain of having your body ripped apart first" She said sadly. Wait, what?! I noticed her fading away. Marshy no!

When I zoned back in, all I could see is foggy images of the room around me, and the sharp smell of my own blood/juice. I heard someone distantly yelling "Are you insane?!" I didn't hear the answer, I just felt more searing pain run through me. Please Marsh...just let me come back to you. This hurts...a lot. Then suddenly I heard a loud snap and everything went silent.

Then I saw Marsh.

This Time, I could hug her.

Paintbrush's P.O.V:

I woke up to the sound of screaming. Me and Fan jumped at nearly the exact same time. That screaming was Apple. Someone was on her, and....eating her?! When my vision focused, I noticed it was Lightbulb. That...can't be Lightbulb....she would never eat someone, much less a teammate. Fan just turns to me, horrorstruck. I scream at Lightbulb. "Are you insane?!" She turns around. She is covered in Apple juice. Disgusting. I notice Fan gagging behind me. "*Bueno, la gente insana no sabe que están locos, así que técnicamente no. Pero en tus términos, sí"* She responded smirking, then turned back to her "breakfast". Fan just stared in horror. "H-How,long till she eats one of us?" He asked fearfully. "I don't know, and I hope we never find out" I reply. Then came the sickening snap, and Fan threw up.

Lightbulb's P.O.V:

Apparently Apple tastes a lot better than I thought. She's sweet, but still tangy. Tastes good, and plus apple's are full of vitamins and stuff. I'm not getting sick down here, unlike Fan. Paintbrush asked me if I was insane. So I answered them honestly. I'm not sure why my brain chose Spanish, if I can still think in English. Weird. I notice that I've reached the core on one side, which disappoints me. There's a lot less.....Wait. What am I doing?! Is this Apple?! Oh my stars....I'm literally eating someone's dead corpse. I'm eating a Team Member, someone I was supposed to protect. I feel like I'm going to be sick....from the thought and the food. I've over eaten from somebody's Corpse. Maybe Paintbrush was right....maybe I am insane. How am I suppose to handle this?! I don't even know how to control myself, much less others! At least I got Apple out of her misery. Wish someone could for me though. I back away from Apple's body slowly, and go lay down. I'm not eating for the rest of the day, for sure.

Fan's P.O.V:

Hearing Lightbulb eat someone made me sick. Literally. Paintbrush stepped back, and asked "Are you done yet?" I nodded weakly, and got up slowly. "That sounded terrible" I responded. "Well you just threw up because of it. I think that's pretty obvious." They replied back to me. I notice Lightbulb isn't eating any more. She's just in her corner, silent. "How long till one of us goes crazy like her?" I ask quietly. "Well Fan, It honestly depends. Now it's back to the three of us. Poor Apple only lasted a day" They said, shaking their head.

Test Tube's P.O.V:

When I got to the Office this morning, the lights weren't on in 21 and everyone was still asleep. Something was clearly wrong, so I kept the lights off and went throughout the audio. I fixed the intercom while Apple was being "introduced". I heard Spanish I didn't understand....then screaming. Crunching, Screaming, chewing. Apparently someone read my note and decided to act. I heard 2

yelling, so it wasn't them. 3 got sick, I could hear it, so that leaves 1. How suprising. Instead of quarantining her this time, I'll leave her in there. Just to see how long she'll last. I don't that'll be very long, considering she has a good heart with a shattered mind. Both physically and mentally. I laugh at the thought. Good Joke, Test Tube. I turn the intercom off and look into the room. Apple's corpse has been eaten from, and there is signs of sickness. Everyone has passed out though, so I'll keep the lights off. They deserve it. Well, time to write another's file and informative. To the Committee and Mephone this time.

(A/N: Thank you so much to @CloverThe3rd For helping me write this chapter! It was hilarious in chat, not so funny in Chapter. But, the idea is still there, so thanks for the help!)

17: Serial Numbers

Log Date:1556. Subject 5 lasted 1 day. It appears it got Subject 3 instead of Subject 1 sick. I believe this has taken a final toll on her sanity, as she hasn't moved for several hours. It appears she's trying the Ribbon method. That won't work too well, as it also seems she's asleep. If Subject 2 catches her awake, I'm quite sure that they will attack. Hopefully not, I want to see what she'll do to herself. Note: In order to prevent further escape methods, today we shall implant tracking chips and Serial numbers. This way, even if they do escape and remove the chip, they'll have a nice reminder of what happened here.

Lightbulb's P.O.V:

I haven't been sleeping. At all. I feel....horrible. I feel sick, I feel depressed, I feel scared, and I feel upset. I can't hear, and I can't see. All I can see are the walls around me, and can hear my own sanity just cracking like the rest of me. Well, I can still see. It's just....different. I may have said I can't keep promises, but I might just keep this one. There has to be a way out of here....right? Pretty sure everyone else is asleep now, even thought it should be time to get up. I hear the door unlock, and someone step in. Test Tube. She's probably came to get Apple out of here, and clean up whatever Fan left behind. "*Qué gusto verse de nuevo. Bueno, no realmete, pero ya sabes a qué me refiero"* I said quietly, not expecting her to respond. "No puedo estar de acuerdo con eso, pero hoy tengo una nueva tarea para ustedes" She responded smartly. I sat up, and turned to look at her. *"Sabes que puedo entendres inglés, verdad?"* I questioned. She cleared her throat. "Of course I do. So, why Spanish? I know it's not the only language you can speak." I thought about that for a bit. "*Supongo que elegí el español porque es lo único con lo que hablo con fluidez y es más fácil que las otras cosas que sé"* I respond. "*Y es lo que mi cerebro eligió para"* I add quickly. I notice her take out a clip board and write what I said down. "I see. Have you tried speaking english, and do you still think in English?" She asked, looking up from her clipboard. "*No creo*

que pueda y sí" I responded skeptically. "Well that's nice. Can you feel any pain anymore?" "*Por qué preguntas"* I responded quietly. She dug around in her coat pocket, pulled out a weird pen thingy, a scalpel, and a microchip. "I need to put one of these on your right hand." I backed away and shouted "What the heck Test Tube?!" Huh. I'm back to English. She grinned. "So you can speak English normally. But I'm serious about the chip thing." I try to comprehend the situation. I don't even think I CAN feel pain anymore. I held my hand out willingly. "I don't think so. Even if I did, it's good punishment for Cannibalism." I said bitterly. "Good. Shouldn't be too bad, since your easily broken. Means your skin is too." She replied, tracing a box on my hand with the Scalpel. It wasn't too bad. Didn't even notice she made a flap until the stuck the chip onto my raw muscle. I flinched, but didn't yell or cry. I was right. I didn't feel pain, I was surprised. When I looked back down, she had stitched my hand back. The chip didn't even stick out, it blended in. "How...odd. And you didn't feel any pain at all? "Nothing" I responded blankly.

Test Tube's P.O.V:

It appears my theory was correct. She can't feel in any pain at all. She's gotten so used to it her brain just dulls it out, unfocused. How delightfully interesting and distastefully concerning. Well, maybe she can be useful like this. I was planning some.....Behavioral tests for later. Since she still has her arm out, over her chip I write her Serial Number. *1-4.* Easier than the first three digits of Pi. She glances up at me. "We done yet?" She asked quietly. "Yes. Do you think you could help me with something?" I asked. I saw her eyes cloud...she's remembering something. I wonder what that would-.....Oh. She snapped back. "Why would I ever help *you?*" She retorted. "I don't think you have much of a choice. You can wallow in your pity until you die, or you could speed things along for yourself. Which sounds better?" I asked her. I knew she'd pick Speed things along. "Fine" She said grudgingly. "What do you need?" I reached into my coat pocket, and this time grabbed two small needles of anesthesia. "I need you to make sure those two stay asleep a little bit longer" I replied, trying to sound positive. Lightbulb didn't react. She just took the needles and did as I instructed. "Good. You can explain later" I take the empty needles back, and repeat the process with Fan and Paintbrush. Fans numbers are *3-4,* Paintbrush's *2-4.* Now It's complete. I walk out the

door quietly, but not before saying "Thanks" to Lightbulb. I hated doing it...But I locked the door behind me and headed to my office.

I sat down at my desk, and sighed. I'm having to write yet another informative in under a month. This time, it's to a kidnapping investigation committee. I pick up a red ink printing pen instead of my usual black, and begin to write in my neatest handwriting.

Hello Factually Members Of the Kidnapping Investagation. I'm not sure if you are aware, but one of your investigators entered my facility. I had no choice but to keep her with the others. She died around 12 hours after she got here. Do not worry, most of the others are alive. I hate to admit, but Subject 4-4, more commonly known as Marshmellow, also died on my premise. I'll be sending you both of their remains. I'll spare the details of their deaths, in their respect. I suggest you do not send anymore investigators down here, or they will join the other subjects in new rounds of experimentation. I have all my subjects Serialized and Chipped, so if they escape, please let me know. Happy Hunting! Yours Truely ——Metal Kidnapper.

I smile in satisfactory at the letter. I grab the two bags of remains I had saved and taped them to the letter. I walked across the room to my mail box, wrote an address on the letter, and stuck it in. I heard it swoop up to where ever it'll go. I didn't add a return address, so I doubt they'll find a way to return the favor.

Three Hours Later

Paintbrush's P.O.V:

My head hurts like crazy. I have no clue what happened other than the fact Apple died. I tried to move my right arm up, but it was stiff as a board. My eyes filter the light around me, and I notice two numbers written in white on my arm. *2-4.* Serial numbers. I look over at Fan, who's waking up too. He seems just as shocked as me to see the number. "P-Paintbrush....Flip your hand over" He stammered fearfully. What on earth-... holy cow. "We've been Microchipped?!" I yelled angrily. Then I heard someone behind me speak. "Basically, yes. Now we really do have no chance of escape" Lightbulb. She's back to speaking English. "Oh hey, you're speaking English now." I remarked sarcastically. "At Least I'm talking" She retorted. "Well I

suggest you keep your mouth closed before it lands on somebody else's corpse" I said harshly. "T-That may have been a bit much Paintbrush" Fan stammered. When I turned to look at her, her eyes were dull, her expression was numb, and small tears pooled in the corner of her eyes. I stayed silent. I wish I could say 'I didn't mean it'....But I did.

Fan's P.O.V:

Okay maaaayyybbeee Paintbrush went a little far on that one. I wish I could help Lightbulb, but she's pushed herself away and lined herself with caution tape. Maybe that tape was always there, and I never noticed, but it's certainly unhelpful now. Why do those two have to fight all the time? It's unhelpful and unprofessional. I glance back down at my hand. I can sort of see the chip, but not very well. I understand why she chipped us, just so she can track us down if we escape. But why did she Serialize us? It's....odd. I don't Iike seeing things I can't understand, but then again, that's been this whole event in a nutshell. I'm worried thought. My tear injury isn't looking so good. It's burns when moved, and it's turning greenish yellow at the edge. I hope it wasn't infected, that wouldn't be good at all. I can only hope It'll be okay.

(A/N: Daaannnng Paintbrush. Things may get harsher, as the Trigger warning is coming up. Well I liked this one, since I no longer have to write Lightbulb in Spanish)

18: Little Help?

Log Date:1557. Yesterday I wrote my informative to the committee. So far, no answer. Not that I'm expecting one of course. I successfully got all Subjects chipped and Serilaized thanks to the help of Subject 1. I really hope this isn't a repeat of 2-3, because if it is, I'm only going to be disappointed. Remember the rules....don't get attatched to Subjects. Along with the successful chip implant, I reviewed the audio of yesterday and heard what is most likely the most epic and unnecessary burn ever recorded. I've already starred the file. After an investigation of Subject 3, it appears the tear I left him is infected. I've already dropped supplies. It's up to them to figure out how to use them.

Fan's P.O.V:

Me and Paintbrush are talking, when we hear a box hit the floor. Lightbulb just stays quiet, in her own little pocket of mind. Now both me and Paintbrush have given up hope. I don't think Paintbrush has forgiven her for her "incident" yet. I walk over to the box, which had come through the food shoot, and pick up the note on it. "To Subject 3: This is a medical kit to help you heal your injury. I've given you all your necessary tools. Your task is to figure out how to use them. Good Luck! —Tt." I read aloud. Paintbrush groans. "You mean we have to do this ourselves?" Test Tube's voice popped back over the intercom for the first time in awhile. "*Yes. I think it's a good first task. After all, if you fail or make a mistake, someone will die because of it"* Wait What?! "You mean this might kill me?!" I pointed to my tear. The only thing it's done so far is ruin my depth perception and turn yellowy green. "*It's infected. If it's remains untreated, it'll kill you. Good luck figuring things out. In the package I've also included some unnecessary tools. Happy Hunting"* She chirped before turning off the intercom. I sighed, and opened the box. Extra paper, Thread, A needle, some jars of stuff I can't pronounce, a packet of gauze,

syringes of stuff I've never seen before, and A bottle. I'm not quite sure what's in it, because it's solid black.

Lightbulb's P.O.V:

I peak over Fan's shoulder, noticing the materials. I had heard what Test Tube said. I know how to fix things like that. I want to help....but I doubt he'll trust me. I've already noticed what's useful and what isn't. But the Black Bottle interests me. I wonder what's in it. I tap Fan on the shoulder quietly. Of course he flinched, but sighed when he saw me. "Oh it's just you. Do you need something?" He asked skeptically. "I know how to fix your tear properly. You needed to know first aid to lead a team, you know." I replied quietly. Fan was about to speak, but Paintbrush fake coughed. "Um Fan, one word please?" "Sure" He replied slowly and walked off with them. Unknown to them, this room is small enough so I can still hear them. "She's the woman who purposely murdered and ate someone. Can you really trust her?" Paintbrush whispered. There it is, the stab of guilt and regret. My stomach lurches just thinking about it. "Oh course I can! Your being too harsh. She was out of a good state of mind, and she's my friend. I don't care what you think, I'm not dying today or tomorrow." Good to know Fan is still on my side. That doesn't take away the hurt though. I don't think anything can. He walked back over to me, but Paintbrush still glared at me. "So, what we need to do?" He asked. "Well, do you want to be awake or asleep for this?" I asked in return. "Any difference?" He questioned. "One you'll feel a lot more pain" "Asleep it is then" He said, laying flat on his back. I went over to the box, picked up the syringe. Anesthesia, but I don't think he knows that. I press it into his arm, causing him to flinch, then knock out.

I grab the needle, thread, gauze, and disinfectant Bottle. I look up at the viewing window, where Test Tube is studying me. "I don't need the extra paper, that was just a waste." I said to her. She just smirked and nodded. Typical. I get myself to work. First wipe the wound clean, add disinfectant, now sew it together. I look down at my work. Not the neatest, but it's life saving. Fan will most likely never see out of his right eye again, considering I just stitched it closed and together. At least he'll live.

Paintbrush's P.O.V:

Apparently Lightbulb can preform minor surgery. Never knew that. I honestly thought this way some kind of murder attempt, but she's actually pretty good at this. I'm still not over Apple thought. Part of me wants to move on and forgive her, knowing she's trying to keep herself together the best she can, but the other wants to just yell and slap her. But if I did that, I'd certainly catch fire. Then Fan would be lit ablaze, and she'd have new taunting material. Why does she even do that? One minute she's smiling and cheery, the next she's physcotic, then furious, then depressed and dull, then back to cheery. (A/N:Welcome to my life Paintbrush) It's like she can't compute her new surroundings, so she makes up her own. Well, now we have medical supplies so if any of us get hurt, we can attempt to heal. What I do know for sure is that I'm not touching that Black Bottle. It's....alarming. When I see Lightbulb grinning at her handiwork, I just roll my eyes. Back to cheerful. I'm not sure what to think.

(A/N: Sorry that this chapter is a little shorter than usual, I've got a huge lead chapter and Plot Point to write and Plan. Thanks to @CloverThe3rd for helping me write this chapter! I appreciate all the help)

19:Bottles

Log Date:1558. Subject 1 was successful in properly healing subject 3. I'm not sure what I expected, she is a leader after all. I do not think she's noticed what I left to her specifically in the box. Well, not with her name on it,but you know what I mean. I didn't blantantly give her cyanide, that would make me look terrible. It's 50% Painkillers, 50% Cyanide. So I feel if she did give any to Fan, she had a 50/50 chance of murder on her Hands. Well, more murder that is.

Lightbulb's P.O.V:

It's too early for me to be awake, but my head won't leave me alone. Marshmellow's shrill screech, Apple's Screaming, Fan being torn apart....all things that are my fault. This whole thing is my fault! I guess that's why I talk so much. Silence is the sound of regret. But I have to look on the bright side of things. I'm a Lightbulb, it's what I do. Let's see....Well....um....Oh. I can't think of anything. Not a single good thing can come from this. And I accept that. I've been Serialized, Cracked, Drove Partially Insane, and Potentially Murdered. What gold could come from this....dirt?! I heard someone across the room stir. Paintbrush. I shouldn't think about them....It makes me feel worse.

"Well, Baxter knows there's a C. Without it....he's just a rab" Me and Paintbrush laugh. Then Baxter claws me. "Ow! I hate Rabs"

"Would you blame me?" I asked softly, not meeting their gaze. "Well It's honestly depends on what happened." They replied, staring into my eyes. It was like they were staring into my soul. It scared me, but I didn't want to look away either. "Well, I promise to do the best to protect you, and our team!" I chirped, hoping that I still seemed normal. "I promise that too" and we swore on it.

"Do you think you could help me with something" "Of course!" Those two words ruined my life, and everyone else's. Just because I had to be a people pleaser. Just because I wanted them to be happy more than myself. I hate lying to myself, but if it means they're happy, I'm happy.

"Promise you'll stick around a little longer?" Paintbrush's pleaded. "Sure" I sighed out quietly.

Paintbrush's P.O.V:

I heard someone mumbling to themselves. Probably Fan again, about some weird Otaku trash. Apparently, it's Lightbulb. And she doesn't look too good. Lightbulb's been a balance scale ever since she was sent to live by herself. I wouldn't over tip it, but I have, plenty of times. I stayed quiet, hoping she wouldn't have to talk to me, and I wouldn't have to talk to her. I...still am debating on whether to forgive her or not. I want to be the good person here, but at the same time, I want to hate her with all my guts. Which is a lot. I notice her get up and dig around the medical box. It was took dark to completely tell what she grabbed, but my heart skipped a beat when I saw it's shadow. That tiny, Black Bottle, was in Lightbulb's hand. "L-Lightbulb, What are you doing with that?" I questioned out to her. I saw her shadow smile in the dark, but it was a forced one. I've known her long enough to tell. "Oh nothing, just seeing what's inside. You know, since it's completely black and stuff" She's replied cheerfully. "I wouldn't. If it's black, that's clearly a warning sign." I warned. "Whatever, suit yourself." She said, and I heard her struggle to get the lip open. "Stupid....Childproof Caps!" She yelled. I quickly shushed her, hoping not to wake up Fan. "Someone is still sleeping?!" I whispered direly to her. Then I remembered. Lightbulb doesn't know how to open Medicine Bottles. I'd have to tell her. I don't know what possessed me to do it....but I told her. "You have to push down on the cap and turn" I said quickly, then covered my mouth. "Thanks. Wait wha-..." She said, opening the bottle. Into her hands as she shook it fell small pills. It was too dark to see what color. It may have been dark, but I saw her eyes light up. "Lightbulb, for the love of god, put the bottle down" I said nervously. "But it's a gift Painty. Gifts can't be bad" She said lightly, drifting her hand through the small pile of pills that lay in the other. "Lightbulb, don't eat them. I know you think

you can eat anything, but you can't. If Laundry detergent can kill someone, those definitely can." I don't even care that she's calling me Painty now. I want her to put the motherfreaking pills down before she hurts herself.

"Why do you even care? I thought you hated me" She replied airily. "I....I don't hate you. It's just the way you work problems out. You try so hard with unknowns....it's unbelievably concerning. I care more than you know, trust me" I pleaded. "I lost the will to trust long ago. The day we got stuck here. Don't go blaming for that either! It wasn't my fault! You say Marshmellow's death was Test Tube's fault, but it was clearly my fault too! You always push the blame onto someone else because *YOUR* too much of a coward to own up to anything!" She cried. Instantly, my hair sparked. It was autopilot. I didn't want to. "Go ahead!" She screamed. "I'm going to end up dying here one way or another!" As much as I wanted to fight with her, her hand was getting dangerously close to her mouth. "Please Lightbulb....you promised" I pleaded quietly, hoping she'd see reason. "I already.....I don't....I just.....I can't..." She stammered. She couldn't make up her mind. That whirlwind of emotion just froze. Then Fan woke up, and everything went to hell.

Fan's P.O.V:

I heard lots of yelling. I tried to ignore it, since my face is still sore, but I couldn't. It's sounded too familiar. Then I heard "Please....Put the the bottle down" I shot up, trying to see where they were. Another weakness of only having one eye? You can't see anything from your weak side. The person pleading was Paintbrush. The Bottle holder was Lightbulb. I stumbled back, surprised. Lightbulb of all people. The cheerful optimist I loved writing about on my Blog Page. One of my closest friends. There she was, standing there with a handful of pills. Where did those even come fr-...Right. The bottle of pure evil Test Tube shot down here. I think she noticed I was up. Okay, she definitely did. Her eyes fell on me...and then Paintbrush screamed. She shoved her right hand's contents into her mouth and swallowed. Only one pill hit the safety of the floor.

(A/N: OH MY CHEESUS. THIS ONE SCARES ME. Me and Lightbulb are very close in personality, so it's a little freaky. So...yeah. Enjoy the horrible cliffhanger. IDK out)

20: Ballad Of Broken Glass

Lightbulb's P.O.V:

I saw Fan. I couldn't take it. Everything just drowned out around me. I swallowed. I recoiled, and nearly vomited from the taste and the feeling. I've always hated medication. I stood still. I'm stuck in a black space. I can't see anything but black. I can't hear anything but black noise. Not white noise, just black noise. Then it crashes down on me like a brick. Everything snaps back into place. I'm twitching on the floor, at least, I think this is the floor. My vision is blurred, and all I hear are rushed voices. The crackling of the Intercom. This hurts way more than an thought it would. With every twitch, every contraction of my muscles, it burns, and then stops. I become unable to move the muscle. I want it to just hurry up and end. It's not fair. This....isn't fair. My hearing tunes in to hear Painty screaming. "WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU CAN'T FIX HER?! SHE'S DYING ON THE FLOOR, YOU DUMB MOTHER FREAKING SCIENTIST!?" I heard Testy's nervous voice. "Part of that was Cyanide.....I can't fix that. She's going to die, either way. It was her choice" She responded. Fan rushed over to me. "Oh my-....oh no....Lightbulb? Can you hear me?" He waved his hand in front of my face. I nodded my head weakly, not sure what else to do. He turned around and called over his shoulder. "She's still holding on! I repeat, she's still holding on" That's a weird thing to say, isn't it?

Paintbrush's P.O.V:

If I could break that viewing glass, I would. Then I hear Fan. I run as fast I can Towards lightbulb. Then I cringe seeing her state. Her eyes are dull, her face is pale, and she's twitching non stop. Her face is stuck in a grimace. I tear up instantly. "You big idiot" I choke. I can't help it. She's dying on the floor, and there's nothing I can do. "P-Painty....do you still sing?" She asked weakly. Fan looked shocked.

"You can sing?" I shot him a warning glare then turned back to Lightbulb. I carefully lifted her up onto my lap, trying not to hurt her. "Not usually...but today can be an exception." I reply weakly. I hate seeing her like this. "Do y-you remember my favorite?" She stammered, twitching and coughing. She's running out of breath. "Do you want that one for a lullaby?" I asked softly. It may seem horribly childish...but I don't care. If she wants it, she's getting it. She nods and I clear my throat. It's been about two years since I've ever tried to sing this one. I try my best to sing clearly, but it's still shaky and low. "Deep in the meadow....under the willow.... a bed of grass....a soft green pillow...."I start. I notice her eyes starting to close, and Fan gasp and sob behind me. "Not yet" I shook her quietly, and she gazed dully at me. "I'm not done yet" I pleaded quietly. "O-Okay...please finish" She coughed, then laid back onto me. "A bed of grass....a soft green pillow...." I restarted. The next line made me almost want to break down crying, knowing it would just send her away. "L-Lay down to sleep....and close your e-eyes.... so when they open....the sun will rise..." I sang quietly. She choked a bit, laughed her small singsong laugh one last time, and smiled at me. "Goodnight Painty" She said, smiling and closing her eyes. I nearly fainted feeling her go limp on me. "Please Lighty.... it's not 2:00 yet." Tears slid down my face silently. But she wouldn't move...nor would she ever again. I grasped what used to be my closest friend, and cried, wanting her back.

Lightbulb's P.O.V:

I liked Painty's song. I nearly fell asleep until they woke me back up. Then they finished. I always loved how Painty would sing that song. I felt so...tired. "Goodnight Painty" I said, feeling one last twitch and shock course through me until I fell still asleep. I noticed I was back to the black space. But instead of nothing, when I turned around, there was Apple and Marshmellow waiting for me. I instantly apologized to Apple, who forgave me easily. She said it was fine, and we all get hungry some times. We all laughed at that. We left the blackness together.

Fan's P.O.V:

She's gone. I can't believe it. Lightbulb, the only true source of light and happiness we had here, is gone. Dead by her own hand. How long has she built up to this? How long was she planned this? What did we do? What did *I* do?! I glance down at Paintbrush, who's crying just like I am. I glance up at Test Tube via viewing window. She's writing in a file, but I can see water reflecting on her glass. Even she regrets this. I'm surprised and don't know how to react. But I do know that me and Paintbrush have to get out of here, for her sake and our own. The song would've been sweet in context...but in reality...it was bittersweet and heartbreaking. Just like where it came from. It's only been five minutes....and I want her back. I don't know how Paintbrush feels....and I'm not sure if I really do want to know. At least Lightbulb died smiling, as she would've wanted. She always hated being unhappy.

Log Date: 1559. I've made a mistake. A terrible, terrible mistake. I should've have left that bottle in the kit. 1 followed suit. I got to hear the ballad of the broken glass. It was as painful sounding as it looked. Cyanide does a lot more to a person than I thought. I'm sure it would've been a lot longer and a lot worse without the painkillers. For once, the victim is still in one piece. Considering she died 'peacefully', that's what I'd hope. Now i've got to write two informatives, and a Death File. The reason I didn't make one for 5-0 is because she didn't last long enough for me to write one. I didn't follow the Science Rules. I got attached to the Subject. I murdered the Subject. Now I feel recoil for my actions. I've been taking notes the whole time of this event. It Is still a behavioral study after all. I loved watching the reactions, hated seeing the actions. I'll run through the audio to see what else I can Find. Hopefully, some evidence of her getting it open herself, or this is clearly foul play. Please, whoever is listening, keep an eye out. Things are changing, and I don't like it.

(A/N: MY SOUL. IT HURTS, AHHHHHHHHHHHHGGGG. The song used is "Deep in the meadow" from the Hunger Games. More feels, how about that? This chapter killed my soul, but I'm still going To keep writing. IDK out)

21: With Great Resent

Log Date:1560. We have reached week 3. So far, three dead. Two still remain. The two subjects that remain are the ones I've deemed most mentally and physically stable. Yet they also seem to hate each other. I wonder how this'll go. I fell asleep at my desk, and as a result, not very good dreams insued. It appears I was working on....oh right. The informatives. I'll report again later.

Around 4 hours earlier, at 2:34 am

Test Tube's P.O.V:

What an odd place. It reminds me of Room 32, but cleaner and nicer. I hear someone, so I turn around. My stomach lurches and I feel stabbing guilt. There is the newly departed Lightbulb, with her hand on a window. I wonder what she's seeing. Clearly something not good, as she's frowning. I see Apple walk up next to her. "Watching them, Huh? Yeah It's entertaining" She remarked. "I can't believe I had to do that to Painty. Seeing them cry when it's not Movie night is so sad." Lightbulb replied sadly. "Well, Hey, hopefully they'll join us soon" Apple suggested. This caused Lightbulb to flare up angrily. "Are you seriously suggesting that?! I don't want to watch them die a horrible death like everyone else here did!" She yelled. I felt more guilt. Still my fault. Then someone from behind me spoke. "That's What I had to do for Apple". Marshmellow. She spoke in such a bitter tone I could've sworn she could stab somebody with it. "I already apologized....okay?" Lightbulb replied sadly. "It's fine Marshy, it really is. We all get hungry sometime" Apple laughed. That's when it went silent, as they all had turned around and saw me.

I immediately bolt up from my resting place. I look around wearily. Nothing. How....odd. I look down at my desk. Right, got to finish my informatives. Oh wait, they're already finished. I guess I just need to send them, then go down to get....Lightbulb's chip. Stars above, that

was probably the worst move ever. I should've coded them to deactivate when the host died. Oh well. I walk over to my mail slots, and start to send the informatives. Until I see a letter sitting at the bottom of one of them. I pick it up carefully.

This is to who ever you are. You know who you are. You need to let those people go, wherever they are, and wherever you are. We don't know much about you, but since you wrote us a letter it's been easier to track you down. We sent this note via vending machine money slot. Hopefully, you haven't murdered any more people down there while in the process of writing this.

Well that hope goes out the window. I continue to read.

Please let the people go, or we will be forced to take immediate action. Signed — K.A.C. Kidnapping Action Committee.

I wonder who actually wrote this. I send my informatives to both of them, knowing that reading Lightbulb's informative is going to really tick off the K.A.C. Good, it'll teach them something.

Five Hours Later

Fan's P.O.V:

I'm honestly not sure if Paintbrush is awake or asleep right now. They've been staring at the ceiling for the past....let's estimate....uh, 9 Hours? I can't tell, it's hard to tell time down here. I get up, and grab a sandwich half from the enormous pile in the corner. I sit down and chew on it a bit. Well, time to do what I usually do. Count the dead, Log down an experience, and Try to finish that escape room game since I have nothing else to do. So we've got three dead. Count the dead, check. I pull out my phone. 25% battery. Still good. I load my files, and begin to type down the log for Lightbulb's unexpected death. Log down an experience, check. To be honest, typing on my phone is a lot harder when I can only see out of one eye. Note to Self: Try and get that fixed later. I pull up the escape game app. Sure, it's quite degrading, but it's distracting and fun. I've made it to Chapter 3, part 2. The game has a total of 40 chapters. It's a hard game, okay?

I'm stuck on trying to get the tile puzzle to work. Then I hear someone yelling. "Don't touch her!" Turns out, it was Paintbrush. Surprise, Surprise. I glance up, and notice Test Tube is there too. Holding her signature scalpel. "She's dead, it's fine. I'm sure of it" Test Tube replied calmly. "Yeah, thanks to you! What do you even want from her dead body?!" Paintbrush yelled back. "Her tracking chip. So if you don't mind, I'm taking it. It was originally mine in the first place" Test Tube bent over and grabbed Lightbulb's limp wrist. I hate watching this....so I just lower my gaze back to my game.

Paintbrush's P.O.V:

First Test Tube ends up murdering people, now she wants a stupid chip back?! She's lost her mother freaking mind. I stand back, but still ready to fight if I have to. She's cuts the chip out. That bloody, blackish blue chip. I bet she'll take Lightbulb out of here soon, considering she's dead. Well, she can't decompose like food objects will. I make a decision. One that'll help me remember Lightbulb for the ages till I join her. "I want that chip" I said quietly. Test Tube glances up at me. "You? Want this chip? Even though it's useless?" She questioned. "I don't care. Just hand it over." I noticed the small hole in the corner. Threading some of my Bristle through that can work as a makeshift necklace. "Fair enough" She said quietly, wiping it off and handing it to me. I study the chip. Small bits of gold shine on it as well. "Are you going to take the rest of her?" I asked slowly. "Only if you want me to" Test Tube replied. I glance at what was Lightbulb. Smiling, just as she always has been. I hate looking at her, because she looks like she's just sleeping. "Just take her" I said bitterly. "Alright then" Test Tube replied, beginning to drag Lightbulb by the foot out of here. Now she's truly free. I grab a shard of metal that was brought in here by Lightbulb, and cut a piece of my Bristle off. I made sure it was long enough for a make-shift necklace, and thread it through the hole in the chip. I put the chip necklace around my neck. I may forget her voice, I may forget her actions, I may forget her home. But I will never forget her face, and I will never forget her. Ever.

Test Tube's P.O.V:

I find it odd that Paintbrush wanted Lightbulb's tracking chip. Apparently with some new observation, they wanted it as a reminder. How sweet. So far, Fan hasn' show any new behavior. I'm not even sure he knew I was in there. Carrying Groceries gave me some strength, as It's a lot easier to drag Lightbulb around now. I find one of my old freeze containers, something I used on Subject 2-2. For now, I'll use it for storage. I pick Lightbulb up, and carefully set her in. I close the container door, and lock it back. Just cautious. That dream has me suspicious. I head backwards to my office, and notice another note from the K.A.C. I just toss it. If they send anyone down here, they certainly are going to become a subject. They saw how well that turned out the first time.

Dear Committee, this is the Metal again. I regret to inform you, Subject 1-4 has passed. For once, this was her choice. You most likely know her better as Lightbulb. I didn't murder her with her consent, if that's what your thinking. She chose to die by her own hand. Literally. Hope you don' t mind any, as there is still two more to "rescue" down here. I doubt any of your attempts shall be successful. I actually was a fan of 1-4 So it hurt me probably as much as it hurt you.

With Great Resent and Dearest Regards, Metal Kidnapper or T.

22: Sick

Log Date 1561. The K.A.C is becoming much more of a pain to deal with than I thought. I mean, surely it can't be ***that*** *serious. Speaking of which, Today is the first day I start official experimentation. These tests may be physical, mental, or emotional, depending on my choosing or the shape of the subjects. I think physical with suffice for today.*

Test Tube's P.O.V:

Well that was certainly refreshing. I walk into my office, and decide to check my mail. What? Did you think I slept in my office? Of course not. Wait.... Test Tube you're talking to yourself again. Great. Anyways, when I glance down at the slot, there's nothing. After 13 letters, they've finally given up. Perfect! Then I turn to the viewing window. I....woke up late?! Both Paintbrush and Fan are up functioning early up or I woke up late. I hope they're early, because if I'm late, I'm losing control.

I tap the dusty intercom mic. It really is a beautiful piece of equipment, such a shame it's not used very often. I've learned my lesson not to get attached. *You're still not sorry about it though, are You?* Now I'm scared. I turn the mic on and notice the two turn up and look at me. I have their attention. Great.

Paintbrush's P.O.V:

God, letting Lightbulb go was the biggest mistake of my life. I should've....done something other than let her! But I didn't, and all I've got is this chip. I don't even remember her singing anymore.... one of my favorite parts about her. Screw my memory, screw this room, screw it all. Everything seems to function perfectly without her. Everything except.....me. That's when I hear a tapping over the intercom. I grip the chip tightly. "Don't worry, I'm not going to let her hurt us" I said to no one in particular. "*Good morning Subjects. I came*

over here to inform you of something." Test Tube said over the intercom. She looked a bit pale, so all I can hope is that she's sick. " *Today marks the day we officially start the project"* Okay, that crosses the line. "YOU MEAN THREE PEOPLE POINTLESSLY DIED FOR NOTHING?!" I screamed. I can't know that she died here for nothing. When I look up again, Test Tube is laughing. At me. "*Don't be silly, of course they died for a reason. The first half of the experiment is just finished, that's all."* She explained. Fan looked extremely nervous. "F-first half?" He stuttered. *"Oh yes. Today I start with physical testing. Today's 'challenge' is to avoid getting sick via rat. In order to end the challenge, you must kill the rat. Have fun!"* "Wait....what rat?!" Fan yelled up, but she was already gone. That's when I heard a squeak.

Fan's P.O.V:

Of course, for the first course she gives us, out of the many things she could do, is this. RATS. Well, a rat, but they're still gross and scary as heck. Paintbrush yelped and I noticed the rat next to my foot. I immediately got up and started running around the room. "Come towards me, I can snap it's neck!" Paintbrush yelled, morning over to themselves as I ran. I stopped to comprehend the sentence. "Wha-" I asked, then screamed. That stupid trash mouse got me by the foot. Then Paintbrush ran over and stomped on it's neck, killing it. "A bit harsh, don't you think?" I asked hesitantly. "If it came from Test Tube, it deserves to die" Paintbrush replied, glaring at the dead rat. I look down at my foot where the rat bit me. Looks like a regular bite to me. "If I were you, I'd keep an eye on it." Paintbrush suggested. "Noted" I responded.

The next morning, I felt like I was burning hot and everything was blurry.

(Sorry for such a long hiatus, these take awhile. Plus I have other things to do. Hope you guys enjoyed)

23: She's not really there, is she?

Log Date: 1562. It seems my rat attempt was successful, and the subjects failed. But I didn't hit my aimed target. Don't get me wrong, 2-4 and I have nothing against each other. I just wanted to put them out of their misery. But instead it hit 3. Surprising. Hopefully they took after their late leader, and did some medical studies. Because they have what they need. They just need to learn to use it

Fan's P.O.V:

I'm not quite sure what time it is, but that certainly doesn't matter. What matters is my head and foot ache like crazy and I feel like I'm Marsh. I tried to sit up, when I did everything protested. I smacked back onto the ground and groaned, which caught Paintbrush's attention. "God Fan what happened to yo-" Then their eyes fell somewhere on my lower leg, probably where that Trash Mouse bit me. I heard their tone gain anxiety, which made me worried. "How do you feel right now?" They asked me slowly. I sighed and tried to roll over so I could at least see part of them. Nope. "I feel like Marsh in the body and Lightbulb in the head and foot" I groaned. "Did you really have to use that comparison?" They said. I could hear hurt in their voice. "Sorry, and yes, yes I did" "Welp I'm glad I listened to TT for once, because that rat got you sick." I sat up immediately, ignoring all the burning protest my body gave in return. "AM I GOING TO DIE?!" I screamed. Even my voice sounded in pain. I could see them a bit better, but not really. Nothing focused at all. They sighed and rolled their eyes. "Hopefully not. I can't handle seeing another dead corpse." I glance at the dead rat and snicker. "What about the rat? He's a dead corpse" Their face flushed. "OH MY GOD-" They took a deep breath and sighed. "Do you want to live or die? I'd say live" They stared at me. Suddenly, my eyes focused, but not on

them. A yellow outline, and an altered voice. "I'd listen to Painty if I were you"

Paintbrush's P.O.V:

I'm not sure what I said or did, but Fan just reached the third plane of existence. I shook him reluctantly, since I don't want "Rat Fever", but he remained foggy eyed and silent. I decided to look where he was staring. ..... Lightbulb's Corner. I look at him, then the corner, and back. Then I slapped him back to reality. "WAKE UP RAT BOY!" I yelled as I slapped. He snapped back. "Wha-Huh?! Where'd she go?" He asked quickly. "Where'd who do what?" I asked, trying to understand him. "She....lightbulb.... was behind you! I saw her and heard her and everything!" I studied him and sighed. "That's called Schizophrenia." "I swear she was there!" I remembered what Lightbulb had told me when I accused her of being insane. "Crazy people don't know they're crazy, so I'm perfectly sane" Fan doesn't think he's crazy. That makes him crazy.

I turned back to his foot. "Lets just medicate your dumb rat foot and get rid of your dumb rat fever." "Sounds good." He replied, then sudden his eyes dulled. I just stared."Lighty says use the second jar sitting in the box, along with the gauze and disinfectant." Lightbulb did know that stuff, but there is no way in this room I'm letting him call her Lighty. When he snapped back, I grasped him by the shoulder. "Don't. Ever. Call her Lighty." I growled, then turned to the box to get his stuff.

Fan's P.O.V:

I sat their boredly, part blind and still hot. Lightbulb was just sitting next to me, just as quiet. Suddenly she spoke. "Does Painty still hate me?" I looked in her direction. "The opposite. They're a literal mess without you. They miss you a lot and so do I" I explained. She looked at my foot and the bite. "If Painty does this properly, that should leave in a few weeks, but It'll give you a mark." I sighed, relieved and disappointed. "So, how's Marsh and Apple?" I saw Lightbulb's somber expression change into a bright smile. "Ooh they're great! They forgave me and now we hang out with Bow on the weekends." I smiled at that. I had completely forgotten Bow was a ghost. Then I remembered what Paintbrush had said earlier. I turned to look at her.

"Are you real, or in my head?" Her expression dulled again. "What do you want to believe? Because either way, you're right" I looked at my hands, then at her. "I don't know" I responded after what seemed like hours. Then she looked up. "Painty wants you. I better skedaddle. See ya later Flatface" Then I blinked and she was goner than a ghost.

Paintbrush's P.O.V:

I finally finished that Motherfreaking foot. It took around 2 hours just for the medication to dry, not to mention finding a way to cut the gauze. Fan better be glad he's alive and breathing, no matter what hell Twisted Tube has planned for us. I glance up and he's snapped back after me calling his name ten times. "Oh. Did you need something?" I rolled my eyes and snorted. "Just your foot. Give yourself a few days. If it's not better by then, you're screwed" His expression fell. Hey, I'm a blatant person. "O-Okay then.." He said, laying down. "I'm going to take a nap now, I have people to talk to" I just stares suspiciously at him. "Suuurrreee buddy. Goodnight I guess." "Goodnight Paintbrush" He responded, passing out.

I wish I could see what He could. I would give anything in the world to see Lightbulb again. But she's dead, so clearly one of us is crazy. I'm surprised I've stayed sane so far. I guess it's my realist demeanour? No clue. I glare up at the viewing window, but I notice Test Tube is asleep over some file work. I hope she's dying, because she's pale and a lot more tired. Let her die in her sleep for all I care. I'm just tired of having to deal with all of this. It's cost me my two best friends and a teammate. You'd have to be pure evil to just do this for fun. I submissively yawned, and flopped over. I didn't realize how tired I really am. I touch the chip and whisper quietly. "Goodnight Lighty"

I was so tired I didn't even hear the "G'night Painty" in response.

(Yaaayyy finished)

24: Machine

(A/N: Today's chapter was written by @Musiic_box , and Edited by me. Thanks dude :3)
Log Date: 1563.
Today something... interesting shall I call it happened. I got a message from the K.A.C after quite a few weeks of nothing. I have also gained symptoms of a common cold. Hopefully my stocks have enough for me to work with. Today's challenge shall be interesting

Test Tube's P.O.V:

I woke up to see a large box in my lobby. It seemingly came from the vending machine snack drop, next to the mail shoot. I should've built it better so stuff would stop falling down here. But it seemed to be sent here on purpose, not accident. I tried to pick up the box, but it was around 3/4 the size of my body and heavy weighted. So I just grabbed a cart and wheeled it to my office. Once inside, I turned on the light of my office and opened the box. From the K.A.C. Great.

"Test Tube"

Wait, how did they learn my name? I was sure my hint was not that easy. Continuing on-

"*We have heard and remembered the letters you sent us of the deaths of the following objects:*

Lightbulb

Apple

Marshmellow

And we have finally found a solution to the murder. Scientists from a different society have provided us with a type of machinery that holds the ability of revival"

Part of being feels disturbed and disappointed by this, but a small part of me feels pleased. I continue to read.

"They say if you set it up correctly, you'd have a 80% chance of revival of mattered object. We thought of this useful, considering we have three dead objects on our hands. Instructions are in the box. Once someone is revived, tell us. Send them back, we demand so."

Not bothered to be signed of course. Personally, I don't have to listen to their commands, they're my subjects. But a thought slipped into my head

Bring someone back? Who would it be....

Then that thought turned into an idea. I lifted the box the best I could, and headed towards the food shoot.

Paintbrush's P.O.V:

I fiddled with my chip necklace. She felt so close, yet so far away. It felt as if she were sitting next to me, holding my arm and chattering away like she had used to. But feeling becoming reality? Disappointment was inevitable. Fan played with his phone, like he had been for the past few weeks. It was probably to it's last moments by now. Then the food shoot made a large thud sound, something slammed against the metal and nearly fell onto Fan once it fell out of the shoot. Startled, he yelled quickly and scrambled away. I chuckled quietly at this, before getting up to examine it. I started walking, then stopped as Test Tube's voice boomed over the intercom.

"Good news Subject. The K.A.C have sent me a package which may be able to bring back one of your friends. Today's challenge is to build it, instructions are in the box. Hopefully you'll be able to bring someone back, if you don't mess it up. Begin"

"Yes!" Fan punched the air, and squealed excitedly. I looked at my necklace gripped it tight.

I'll bring you back, Lighty.

Fan reached into the box and pulled out a sheet of paper. It must've been the instructions. The print was nothing I could read, so I just looked at him. He scanned over the paper, then excitedly jumped and squealed again. "Test Tube taught me how to read these!" He said ecstatically, then flinched awkwardly notice he said that *monster's* name. "We'll get them back!" I cried, irrantionally hugging Fan. I was honestly too relieved to care. "We'll get *her* back!" "O-Oh" Fan said, pulling away from the hug. I was fine with this, as I didn't mean to do it in the first place. "We're getting ligh" He stopped. "tbulb back" "Duh!" I stated, relaxing finally. "Who else would we get back?" I quietly prayed to God that he didn't have some other dumb opinion. He started to open his mouth, then shut it as if not wanted to finish. Then he actually spoke. "Okay. Let's go this"

Fan's POV:

Reading that sheet was a breeze. Test Tube had spent an entire day teaching me how.

"Now if it has that symbol next to it, that means it must be inserted where the arrow is pointing" She had explained. The sun shot off her glass and made her green glow so satisfying to look at. Her smiled was eased, comforting and trusting. "So what does this mean?" I had asked, pointing to another symbol. "That's a key, instead of writing the name of the equipment, refer to the right side of the instructions, where the numbers are next to the words" "That makes sense!" I replied innocently...

What happened to her? I stared helplessly into the intercom. *She isn't like this....*

"Why are you doing this?!" I cried to her, hoping to summon my Test Tube from the depths of wherever she went. "It's for science Fan. I'm perfectly sane. This is just for my studies" She replied, smiling. I flinched as she touched the edge of my paper. I glanced up at her worriedly. "You

wouldn't...." I said quietly. "Oh 3, but I would"

"Oi, Fan Kid!" Paintbrush snapped his fingers at me, finally dragging me back to present reality. "You okay? You were spacing out there" *He wondered if I was okay.* I honestly expected them to yell at me for my ignorance or something like that, but I guess he had gotten tired of that. "Yup, all the parts out?" I asked stupidly. The floor was littered with metal parts, a plastic bag of screws, and a paper bag of tools. "No I shoved them all back up the food shoot" They replied sarcastically, rolling his eyes. "Yes, they're here. What's my first step?"

Paintbrush's POV:

"And then you'll need to hammer that screw into 5" Fan instructed. Usually him telling me what to do would result in a hard slap across the face, but this time I depended on him. *He can bring Lighty back, just shut up and listen.* I pounded against the screw, then pulled out the screwdriver to secure it. We had been working 4 hours now, nonstop. (A/N:Music: GENTLEMEN OF THE JURY, I'M CURIOUS, BEAR WITH ME. ARE YOU AWARE THAT WE'RE MAKING HISTORY-)

I waited for Fan's next instruction. He flipped through the instructions back and forth, then looked at me with relief. "I-It's Done!" He said. I stood up and ran over to him to stand beside him and look at what we'd done. It was a sort of small machine. It had a circular base and a glass cover, the roof following the base. If I'm honest, it looked a bit like a small shower.

"Splendid! The instructions should tell you how to power it" The intercom buzzed out. *Yeah Twisted Tube, thanks for the help.* I thought sarcastically. Fan scanned through the pages again, then put down the papers and sighed in defeat. "We need to put a DNA sample in there" He pointed to a tiny opening in the circular base. It could only fit a cube of cheese if we really tried. "We don't have anything"

Instantly I began to panic. We didn't have anything left of Lightbulb. "We could use the blood sample?" I asked, remembering her blood being painted on the door. I shuddered thinking of it, but hopefully this would solve our problem. "It says we can't use liquids. And even if we could, how would we get it off the door?" Fan sighed as he

dropped the paper and sat down in his corner. I almost broke into tears. I was promised a chance to get her back, we worked so hard....how could it all just stop here? I wrapped my arms around myself, then flinched when I felt something dig into my arm. I pulled Lightbulb's chip from my arm. It had really sharp edges and was in the shape of a square.... Then I realized. I screamed happily, jumping up and running over to Fan. Fan just stared at me, expecting an explanation. I picked him up and hugged him, making him yelp, then set him back down. He was standing now, and I shoved the chip in his face.

"Th- The chip!" I yelled. Fan still looked at me, concerned and confused. "It's square and was in Lightbulb's hand!" I watched as his eyes lit up, then he too was squealing like a little kid. "Put it in! Put it in!" He squealed, pushing me towards the machine as we both shook with excitement. I inserted the chip into the slot. *A perfect fit!* I thought to myself. I closed the hatch and Fan turned on the machine. It whirred as the glass became foggy, light emitted from it's depths. I held Fan close to me, anticipation crawling over us like the Trash Rat.

Finally the machine gave a loud crack, then stood still. We both stared at it, expecting *something*. After a lifetime of silence, suspense and worry, something rubbed against the fog clearing it away. Behind the glass stood a perfectly healthy and fit figure stood. Grey and yellow aligned next to each other, confused grunts coming from the glass tube. Fan and I were speechless.

"L-Lightbulb?" I trembled. The though of having her actually being back killed me and gave me life in the same heartbeat. Fan opened the door, and steam filled out. Finally we stood face to face with the figure in the machine. It stood at the entrance and stared at me and Fan. Then the expression changed.

"WHY THE HELL DID YOU REVIVE ME?!"

25: Bottle Caps

Log date 1564:

The subjects have successfully revived another subject with the gifted machine. Whether they'll be smart enough to know the experiment will last longer the more of them there are, I don't know. I hope not. As for my condition, it has still progressed to a worsened state. Hopefully I'll find something.

Fan's P.O.V

“WHY THE HE'LL DID YOU REVIVE ME?!"

A clear scream echoed from the depths of the machine, making me feel more uneasy and unsure.

Did something go wrong?

Suddenly air whisked past me. I heard yells and growls of pain as I turned to face it's direction. “Lightbulb!"

It is her! This was my first impression, then through the smoke I saw her again and my heart stopped beating.

“YOU KNOW HOW MUCH I HATE IT HERE! WHY WOULD YOU BRING MS BACK?!" She screeched, halfway between rage and tears.

“G-GET OFF ME YOU METAL PIECE OF-" I flinched when i realized that Lightbulb had started attacking Paintbrush, who was powerless to fight back. Well, he's not completely powerless... He just doesn't want to hurt her after all he did to bring her back. I realize this with a pang of sadness.
But I can't blame her.... no one would be happy to be down here

“STUPID! STUPID! STU-” Lightbulb continued to punch and kick at Paintbrush, who still struggled to throw her off. I raced over and hesitantly picked up Lightbulb and threw her onto the floor, still trying to be gentle with her. She stopped being enraged and became frightened, anxiety clouded her eyes. “F-Fan?” Lightbulb whimpered, her breath icy and shallow.

“Yes!” I sat down in front of her, she scampered away but I shuffled forward a bit.

She looked up at Paintbrush who had started coughing up blood, then mumbled something that was anything but an apology. “G-God.” Tears welled up in her eyes, her head tucked between her knees. “I-I’m sorry… It’s just this place is literal hell and I really don’t wanna be… here…”

“It’s ok. We’re sorry…” I scooted myself around to sit next to her and wrapped my arms around her, carefully. She rested her head on my shoulder and continued to sob.

Paintbrush stood awkwardly at a distance, bruised and torn, wood stuck out from places around his spine and he had begun to shiver. Lightbulb is practically mentally disabled, Paintbrush is dying, I’ve been close to death twice now.

I glanced down with a sad and disappointed look as I realised all of us getting out alive was very unlikely. Especially considering we’ve seen three deaths, with two of them now still dead-

“Apple!” I sprung up, letting Lightbulb almost fall to the ground.
“Test tube has her chip! We could bring her ba-”
“NO!” Lightbulb shakily stood up and ran over to the machine, jump-kicking it.

The machine split into a million pieces, nails and damaged metal flooded the floor, glass exploded and the machine gave out a final whirl, before deactivating for good.
“Why the hell did you do that?” Paintbrush stumbled to his feet and cautiously approached Lightbulb, who flinched at his state.

She straightened back up.

“I’m already back at this dump, Apple doesn’t deserve that too.” Lightbulb snapped tensely. I quietly stood between them, the tension in the air fizzing. “Well, I guess…” I chuckled, trying to lift the spirits of my fellow cell-mates. Lightbulb was in no shape to do so, so someone had to. “Welcome back, Bulbie.”

Paintbrush’s P.O.V

Everything hurts.

I kept shivering from the damage Lightbulb had caused, physically and mentally. As much as I would’ve liked to of thrown her off and defend myself it felt so wrong. How could I work so hard to bring her back just to hurt her again?

Being here is enough to kill her, isn’t it moron? I mean, she did it once. I glanced over at her and Fan. Fan had been trying to comfort her for ages now, she was curled up in a little ball, Fan’s hand on her back.

On one side I was furious, this… thing!.. thinks she can just come back and see all our work and treat us like that?! But on the other, I felt guilty. I thought this was what she wanted but it clearly wasn’t.

I stared back at the intercom, probably bracing myself for Test-tube’s sharp and teasing words, when she walked through the door instead. She stared at me, at first with pity but soon replaced with a dull and dare-I-say happy smile.

“How… ironic.” She said, grabbing her clipboard and scribbling something into it.

Rage burned within me, I could’ve died and all she cares about is this stupid experiment. “Actually, that’s not a good idea.” Test tube interrupted. When I glanced at her, completely confused, she aimed her pen at my bristles, which had started to boil.

“Huh.” Lightbulb glared at me, disappointment clouding her eyes. “Guess some objects never change.” Fan shivered at her dark words, then whimpered when he saw my raged expression.

“And I guess some objects do.” I shot back, ignoring Lightbulb’s hurt

eyes. “We don’t need this right now.” Fan jumped up, holding his arms out. “You’re right.” Lightbulb responded, curling back into her ball, Fan let out a defeated sigh.

Silence spiked the room for a lifetime.

“I came here to check up on you, Subject two.” Test tube said, crouching down to me and examining my arm. I tore my arm away from her irrationally, she raised her eyebrow with a ‘are you really serious?’ frown as I reluctantly passed her my arm again.

She ran her hand over my back, occasionally stopping to poke a bruise or cut. “It’s getting late.” Test tube yawned, standing up, “I’ll work on you in the morning.”

It was when I finally looked at her I saw how drowsy she looked, bags fell under her eyes and her arms and legs were shaking. Even when she was inspecting me I thought her hands were a bit hot and uncoordinated.

“Hey are you okay?” I asked hesitantly, when she looked at me I almost thought she was afraid. “Yes.” She answered strongly, “Yes of course… Yeah…” She stared into nothing. Lightbulb and Fan were already asleep.

I nodded quietly, then watched as she attempted to leave, smacking into a wall. The door closed as I worriedly watched after Test-tube, then shook my head.

I don’t care for her, she wouldn’t give up a bottle-cap for us.

I looked over at Lightbulb, calmly lying on Fan, peace at last. She finally looked happier, even after today…

She wouldn’t give a bottle-cap for me either, is it logic to care about her?

26: Clueless

Log Date 1565:
The infighting seems to continue. Subject 1 has certainly picked up an attitude from her absence. Subject 2 does still hold grave injuries, but we're working on it a step at a time. As for myself, God knows when I'll drop. But If I do, they have no way out. But that's besides the matter. I'm intrigued for what will happen to Subject 3. He's shown the least concerns down here. Surely, something must be bothering him.

Paintbrush P.O.V
A blurry haze wafted above me when I woke up, the air was stained with a sudden scent, or feeling to be precise.
I sat up and stared at the opposing corner, Fan was already awake and looked terribly tired while he was letting Lightbulb sleep on his shoulder. He was shivering so much it was a surprise to me that Lightbulb had slept through it.

"Uhh, so!!" I said, hating the awkward atmosphere between us. Fan looked at me.
"I-I told you!!" He replied, sharp anxiety in his voice. "She wouldn't want to of.. of been here!!"
Ignoring the slight feeling I should've stay silent, I jumped up and almost fell over.

"And what makes you think you know everything?" I snapped arrogantly. "How long have you known her? I doubt you've put up with her for seven years straight!!".
Even as I spoke I felt guilt squirm within me, I hadn't met her during Season 1 of Inanimate Insanity, I met her around the same time as Fan.
Maybe even later than him..

"You're right.." He sighed, half-heartedly, letting Lightbulb slip a little

bit. Irrational and desperate to call him out again, I yelled.
"Of course I am!! Don't forget.. I know more than you ever will. It's been like that since the start, and that's how it's staying." Guilt made me want to throw up as I wanted so desperately to run away and not continue, but my angry domineer froze me in my place.
"Y-Yeah.." Fan responded genuinely, the prominent hurt in his eyes hurting more, "You're right.. I-I'm sorry.."
(MB/N : hELP MY HEART HURTS-)

Lightbulb's P.O.V
Annoyingly loud yells woke me up. Slowly, I opened my eyes, flinching at the unnaturally cold room temperature.

As I gazed around the room I realised that Fan and Paintbrush must've gotten into an argument, or something that caused the plainly obvious state of anger, guilt and contempt.
I tugged quietly on Fan's arm, cringing when I saw his dark, icy eyes turn their dull stare on me.
"Hey. Paper-boy. Everything good?" I asked, bracing myself for an explanation.
"Yup. Are you ok there?" Fan replied, obviously forcing his energy and enraging Paintbrush. Annoyed by his words, my stare became more intense.
"Yeah, because when you drop spaghetti onto a white carpet nobody notices." I replied scornfully, sitting up. "It's obvious that something has gone down. As your team captain I demand to know what happened." The tone in my voice must've done something because he started to shrink back, like he desperately wanted to avoid it.
I opened my mouth to snap at him, for a good cause of course, when Test tube opened the door. More anger bubbled inside me just from the sight of her.

"Subject 2." She said, her voice reflecting no emotion, "Let's go."
For once, I recognised the awful state Test tube was in, and couldn't give an anchovy if she dropped dead right now. Instead, an evilly happy smile flickered across my face.
Paintbrush, or Subject 2, murmured something probably negatively arrogant under their breath and left with Test tube. The door slid shut behind them.

"Good riddance-" I said sharply under my breath, then turned back to

Fan.
The poor thing. I inspected Fan as he shivered, his tear only just healed up and his foot was slightly swollen. I grabbed his shoulders and shook him a bit.

"You can't actually be serious right now! You're a mess and Paintbrush clearly isn't helping you a bit." The realisation that Fan was in a terrible state hit me like a bat to the head, I shook it off.
"Fan. Please. God, this place isn't helping you.. You're suffering emotionally and physically.."
Guilt kicked me in the back as I realised his eye, that brutal torture, that was my fault. If I had just kept my dumb hands to myself he would've been fine.. No. I don't need this right now. He needs me. I can come later.
"Listen. Whatever Paintbrush said earlier doesn't mean anything, they're just tired of suffering down here, like us. Not to mention Paintbrush would yell at a speck of dust being an inch 'outta place, arrogant idio-
Just please. Tell me what happened." I said confidently, standing up to show dominance.

Thanks for the tips conscience.
Fan sighed, slightly falling out of his little ball and explained what Paintbrush had said earlier and what had been going on.
"I-I tried to tell him you didn't want to-"
"Them." I said hesitantly, not wanting to show care or support for Paintbrush. I felt urged to though. "Paintbrush is a them." Fan looked at me, sudden understanding clouding his eyes.
"Oh.. Well I tried to tell them that you obviously wouldn't want to be here, they wouldn't listen though." Fan muttered before losing himself in his own thought.
"Selfish little-" I clenched my hand into a fist, Fan quickly looked up.
"Pardon??" He asked innocently.
"Nothing." Studying his eyes further, I realised he mustn't of gotten any sleep. Large dark bag fell under them and he was shaking, so much I was surprised that I hadn't woken up sooner. "Kiddo, you should get some sleep." I said gently, laying him onto the floor.
"I-I'm sorry.." Fan winced.
"For what?"
"For everything. I could've stopped them-"

"Hey. Don't say that. Looking at you right now, maybe it was a good thing.. We just need to make it a good thing.."

I started spacing out, not sure whether to be thankful for the opportunity to finally set Paintbrush in their place for a change or to be tearing my non-existent circuits out over the fact I've been dragged back to this hell.
"Y-You're right.. heh.. What was I thinking..?" Fan giggled to himself, drawn out by fatigue.
"G'night, paper kid." I said, patting him as I got up and walked over to the other side of the room.
"Goodnight.." He breathed out, falling asleep instantly.

Poor, poor thing... I thought. The thought that Paintbrush had said such harsh and egotistic things to Fan made me sick with rage.
At least Fan knows when to shut his mouth Paintbrush.. Lier didn't put up with me for the life of them, pssh..
I kicked the ground quietly, yet boiling with frustration.
A year and a half we've been here.. And I'm not letting us stay here for any longer..

Paintbrush's P.O.V
Click
The bars around my wrists snapped shut, giving me a false sense of security.
I was in, Test tube's office, health, place? Cabinets lined the walls and the stench of clean rubber stained the air. Lots of unnecessary looking machines surrounded the small space as Test tube began to look through a draw.
She swiveled her chair around to face me, a small hammer and flashlight in hand and looked at me, teasingly pitiful.
"What?" I asked cluelessly.
"You were.. putting up quite a fight there." She said, fiddling with a mechanic on the flashlight.

Oh gosh. Test tube must've watched the whole thing. I really didn't want to say anything I did, but no one can tell me that it wasn't true, right?
"He's an idiot." I spat angrily, trying to hide to guilt in my voice.
"How so..?" Test tube asked, only slightly intrigued. I chuckled.
"Doubt you wanna know. All you care about is your stupid

experiment anyways-"
"An experiment that revolves around reaction. And what am I trying to hear from you?" She interrupted, finishing her sentence with a mockingly sympathetic voice, as if she was teaching a kindergartener.
"Don't get smart with me, Testy." I growled through gritted teeth.
"Well if you didn't want me to get 'smart with you' then how about thinking twice before you make a fool of yourself then? Hmm?" Her voice started gaining annoyance, which pissed me off even more. She looked at my bristles. "Aaand there you go again! Honestly Paintbrush, get a hold of-" she stopped, clearly halted by her own thoughts. I quickly tried to calm myself down, shameless of my habit. It had been a few minutes as Test tube proceeded to just sit there, her thoughts conflicting in her eyes. I began to grow impatient.

"Plan on doing anything or am I your chained-down therapist for the meanwhile now?" I asked sarcastically, hinting my impatience in my tone. Quickly, she sat back up.
"Y-Yes. Of course."

Lightbulb's P.O.V
I paced back and forth, led by some thought or weight over my head, my soft footsteps echoed off the shallow concrete walls. I didn't know what I was trying to work out but it wasn't something I could just let rest.
Suddenly, the door slid open before me. I jumped a little bit before calming down to stare at Paintbrush and Test tube.
"Oh.." I sighed, disappointed in what was in front of me. Now that I'd kicked over a machine and spat at Paintbrush like I did, I felt ok to just be salty and rude, so that's exactly what I did. "Hey welcome back! I'm sure you'll love it here too Paintbrush!"
Sarcasm.
Oh what an art.

I smiled enthusiastically, and bowed as if I was actually welcoming them to somewhere exciting. I saw them take a deep breath before entering the room, pushing me with their arm as they came in. Test tube chuckled.
"Stop!" She said lightly, eyes finally lighting up with a blunt childlike enthusiasm. "You're confusing the stylistically challenged version of Paintbrush!" She chuckled to herself, expecting my response.

"Good. Serves them right." I sneered, relishing the look of disappointment and slight annoyance across Test tube's face as she shut the door once again.

"What's your problem?" Paintbrush asked as soon as the door had shut, I turned around to face them.
"What's yours'?" I asked, furious at how Paintbrush had called me the one with a problem, "How could you say those things to Fan?! The kid's still young! Do you even remotely understand how much the words of someone so much older than him mean?" The more I spoke the more I grew enraged and upset.
"So what am I meant to do?" Paintbrush spat back, stepping forwards. "Just tell him 'Oh! It's alright to just walk of the cliff! You're still young anyways!' Huh?!"
"Can't you see the line between telling someone they're an idiot and walking off a cliff?" I snapped back
"All I'm saying is his ignorance could get him killed one day. Just like it killed you."
"You take that back!!" I ran up to Paintbrush and grabbed them, my anger giving me a headache. They hesitantly threw me back off, a clear hurt haze from their eyes cut through me.
"I'm not letting another object die down here!" They yelled, probably on the borderline of tears.
"So your method is to convince Fan he's clueless? Like that'll help anyone down here? What are you?!" I screamed back.
"I'm smart! Unlike you I know what I'm doing! I'm the only actual one here who can keep this team in check!"
"Smart? Smart?! Listen to yourself! Now order to 'save' Fan's life you want to convince him he's stupid! Paintbrush you have no clue what you're doing!"
"Fan is an idiot, and learning from your ignorant example he won't get any better. He will die down here. Just like you did, got it?"
Too stunned by rage to reply, I kicked Paintbrush as hard as I could and stormed over to the other corner of the room.

I hate them.

Paintbrush's P.O.V
I hate me.

I hate what just happened, I hate this place, I just want to eat all my

words and drown in regret instead.
Now my side hurts even more from Lightbulb's kick, even though I totally deserved it.
As much as I want to apologise it'd be a weird move now, maybe later.
I sit back down in the opposite corner, the one furthest from Fan and try to fall asleep.
If I wake up dead, couldn't say I minded.

27: Year

(THIS IS SO LATE IT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE RELEASED ON HALLOWEEN IM SO SORRY YALL-)
Log Date 1566:
Today's the day I try something new. Today's a mental experiment day. Well more of mental and emotional experiment, but close enough. I'll be doing an... interview of sorts. See if I can find any weakness to work through or learn anything important. Oddly enough... I feel like I did. Don't get close...
Don't get close

Lightbulb's P.O.V
I jumped awake from the consistent prod I felt on my side, it's like no one could ever get a moment of peace in this place. I rolled over, grabbing whatever was poking me and dragging it to the floor, hearing a startled yell in response.
"Paintbrush?" I said, confused and concerned as I backed away from them.
Their expression was desperate and scared, so I let myself go and sat up-right.
"I-It's Fan!-" They whispered, their voice digging a pit of anxiety in my stomach.
"Ohh so now you care about Fan?!-"
"We don't have time to argue!!" Paintbrush snapped, unwanted understanding fluttered inside me. "I don't think he's... ok."

I was about to ask Paintbrush to let me see him when Paintbrush stood up and pointed to him. I gasped quickly and held my breath. Then breathed out.
I grabbed Paintbrush's arm and threw it.

"You jeebweezer. He's just cold!" I sighed, hinting my anger from their ignorance in my tone.
"I..." Paintbrush opened their mouth to argue, but then took another look at Fan. Cold thoughts clouding their eyes.
"I'm sure nothing is wrong with him." I said, not mad anymore but just neutral. At least Paintbrush had shown some concern.
Paintbrush didn't talk after that, just leaned on a wall and stared at Fan. I decided to get up and actually communicate with Fan, just to make sure he is actually ok.

"Fan?" I approached him gingerly, trying to imagine how I'd do it before this whole lab thing took off, but my memories felt drained.
"Paper-buddy? You alright there?"
As soon as I laid my hand on Fan's shoulder he stopped shivering like he had been before. Sharply, he turned around to face me. The sweet smile on his face half pleasing me and half concerning me.

"Lightbulb!!" He cheered, he sounded so happy I began to actually smile. "Look!! Look!!" He put his gentle hand onto mine, it felt softer than usual. His eyes sparked with a childlike happiness, it felt so... extraordinary.
"Look!! Look!! Look!!-" After a while that's all he was saying, I waited for him to show me something but that's all he did.
"Look at what, paper kid?" I chuckled, halfway through my laugh he just hugged me. It was so sudden I yelped, just a bit, and then hugged him back. I felt better.
Way better.

Test tube's P.O.V
I pressed my hand against the room 21 door, shaking still from the terrible fever that had been weighing down on me for almost two weeks now. My hand glided over Lightbulb's writing from, maybe a year ago? It stank the door up but hey, can't say it wasn't a nice touch.

Today was going to be, interesting.
I decided that today was the day I started testing the subjects, after a year or so surely they would have some interesting attributes. I wanted to start out small and just interview them separately, then the rest of the program will come in its own time.

I swung the door open and found myself startled. Paintbrush was neatly sitting on the floor, legs formerly crossed over each other, while Lightbulb and Fan were doing something childish in front of them. Lightbulb seemed, happy..? If happy was a word I'd ever use to describe Lightbulb after her recent attitude. And Fan... I don't think I've ever seen him so playful and childish. Constantly giggling and wearing the largest and sweetest smile I've seen in a long time. They didn't notice me come in.

"We could take it all the way to the moon!" Fan squealed enthusiastically, taking Lightbulb's hand in his and looking excitedly into her eyes. Lightbulb actually grinned back.
"You can do whatever you wanna do, kiddo." She chuckled sympathetically, something in her voice was concerned. Paintbrush smiled a bit, but then finally noticed me and sighed. Lightbulb looked at them, followed their gaze and then frowned.

"Oh. Heeyyy Test tube." Lightbulb rolled her eyes. Fan shuffled closer to Lightbulb, who put her hand slightly on his back.
"I-I'm here for Subject 3." Surprise from their latest 'activity' got my words stuck in my throat. Lightbulb slumped over, disappointed, while Fan tugged on her arm.
"What's happening?" He whimpered innocently.
"You have to go with.. her." Lightbulb replied hesitantly, a parent-like protection shading her tone.
"M-Me?"
"Don't worry. If she hurts you I'll be there for you, ok?"
Fan's stare gained anxiety, then he gave Lightbulb's arm a final squeeze as he got up and approached me, looking back to Lightbulb. Lightbulb lit up with pride and strength.
"You'll be fine, kid."
"Come in."

I opened the door to what I like to call my "interview room". The entire walk to the room wasn't that awkward. Fan skipped the whole way, although he was silent.
Fan looked at me, then cautiously stepped into the room and sat down in the nearest chair. I sat in the one opposite to him.
"Listen, 3." I said calmly, putting my hands together in front of me. Fan's legs swung energetically, hardly touching the floor. "Anything

you say in here will only be between you and me. If there's anything you don't want me to say to Sub- I mean Lightbulb or Paintbrush, it will not be. Clear?" Fan looked a tiny bit reassured.
"Alright." He said, his voice unnaturally more high-pitch.

"Ok. All I'm going to do is ask you some questions. Please answer them with 100 percent honesty. Again, nothing you say here will be said to the others."
"Ok."
I cleared my throat. Let's do this.
"Do you feel closer to Lightbulb?"
"Well, yeah."
"How so?"
Fan began to fiddle with his fingers,
"I mean, obviously I sit closer to her hehe-" He began to chuckle to himself, over something not so hysterical I'd say.
"Well, she's better than Paintbrush! Always throwing a tantrum and whatever." He finished.
"And why do you think Paintbrush does that?" I asked.
"Lightbulb told me it's because they're just being an idiot and to ignore it."
"And do you ignore it?"
"W-Well, a bit."
"Explain."
"I-I.. I.." He stuttered, He obviously didn't want the other subjects to know.
"They won't know." I said, relaxing in my chair.
"I hear them fighting about me while I sleep.." He whimpered, his voice caught in anxiety and depression.

The sudden realisation that Fan was the youngest in the group shattered my heart. Here this child is, being the constant conflict between his peers, the only two people he could be close to down here.
He's mentally drained and lost.
"And this bothers you?" I asked stupidly. He stared into my eyes with drowsy insanity.
"No!! Because hearing your two best friends argue about you while you're trying to escape this hellhole the only way you can isn't going to drive me insane at all!!!" He screamed silently. Suddenly he

grabbed me by the hands and dragged me closer.
"Test tube what the heck did we do..?"
"Wh-What?"
"What did we do? Why do we starve everyday? Why do we sleep beneath that thick cloud of anger and guilt?
What did we do to deserve that..?"

After the interview, I walked out from behind the desk and opened the door for him and lead him back to the room.
I opened the room 21 door and instantly threw Fan back. He looked at me, eyes already dropping with dark knowledge.
"Stay here." I whispered to him, he nodded softly.

I approached the room again, flinching at Paintbrush and Lightbulb's arguing, again.
"No, really, it's adorable when you blame literally everyone but yourself!" Lightbulb bickered with an angry yet sarcastic smile.
"It IS all your fault! If you had just taken two seconds to think before you left like that maybe he wouldn't of-" Paintbrush screamed back.
"Wouldn't of what? Lost it? Just because I leave for a bit means that he falls apart?"
"I di-"
"No! You did! Don't you dare tell me I'm the irresponsible one and then blame me for not taking charge for Fan's life when he needed it most!"
"Well I'm not the one killing myself here! Did you even take two seconds to realise that maybe seeing you die like that in front of him wouldn't scare him? And why would he turn to me for support? He relies on you!!"
"It would've been nice for you to take charge for once! You complain about having no responsibility in anything and then blow it once you finally get the chance!"
"And it's not like you blew your shot every time you had it!! For someone who actually led a team I'd expect you to know how others react to stuff like that!!"
"I-"

"Alright. That's enough." I said. Lightbulb and Paintbrush froze awkwardly, then stomped off. Lightbulb sat in the top right corner of the room and Paintbrush crouched into the bottom left corner. Fan

peeked over my shoulder.
"Are they ok?" He asked, his innocence making me upset.
Paintbrush and Lightbulb argue, sure. But this is something else.
"Yes. You can go in now." I stepped aside. Fan ran inside and looked around for Lightbulb, running over to her once he found her. I let them chat and asked for Subject 2

Paintbrush's P.O.V
Right now? Honestly, if she's going to kill me that's fine. After what happened with Lightbulb I wouldn't mind just dying. I hate having a differing view and having to keep this 'you and me argue because we're Paintbrush and Lightbulb!' charade up. Test tube was probably sitting right outside the door doing nothing but recording every piece of it! Lazy moron.
We reached her very tiny looking room, when I sat down my bristles still brushed against the roof.
"Listen 2-" Test tube began, straight into her clipboard.
"I got a name y'know." I interrupted, crossing my arms angrily. I hated it when she used the number instead of my real name.
What the hell happened to us? Three years or so of this Inanimate Insanity bizz just to have a number as my name?
Test tube irritatedly cleared her throat.
"Anything you say in here will only be between you and me. If there's anything you don't want me to say to Subject 1 o-"
"Lightbulb or Fan. Now keep going."
"It will not be. Clear?!" Test tube raised her voice. I smiled, finding triumph in being able to aggravate her. Although I didn't want to portray the same cocky attitude as Lightbulb, I didn't want anything to do with her.
"Clear."
"What seems to be the problem between you and Lightbulb?" Test tube asked, patiently poking her notebook with her pen. I rolled my eyes.
"Oh boy. I really do wonder!" I sighed sarcastically. Test tube shot me a glare, it felt more like a death threat. Her eyes darkened with irritation. For once, she had managed to intimidate me. Without words, I instantly sat up, remembering what Lightbulb and Fan's behaviour had led them to. Watch your steps before you end up like your friends, will you? Test tube hissed through her gaze. I snagged my gaze from her's and focused on my hands that were fidgeting

under the table..

"She's just being ignorant. In a hell-hole like this, slight offence, it's just annoying to one, have to look after Fan and two, put up with her arguments." I said.
When I looked back up Test tube was.. leaning closer? I stared back at her understanding gaze, immobilised with confusion.
"Y-Yeah?" I asked. Instead of backing off, she made a 'keep going' signal with her hand. My eyes widened in surprise, but out of pure defeat from my earlier shock I choked the words out

"I mean, imagine, here you are trying to make any pragmatic approach you can in order to like, not die, and then here comes Lightbulb! Waltzing up to everything like she can pretend she makes no mistakes! Blames me for whatever the heck is up with Fan even though she just.. left.. And you saw how she left didn't you? I tried to convince her those pills were no good and it must've been pure ignorance that must've pushed her to do somethi-"
"Something so incomprehensible and irrational..?" Test tube interrupted, stealing the words right from me.
"E-Exactly!!" I said, lifting up from my chair just a bit, a relieved smile forced itself onto my face, no matter how hard i tried to stop it.
Test tube chuckled a bit, then sat down in her chair with a smile and peacefully scribbled some notes onto her notepad.
At least I can make one person enjoy themself down here..

(AN/MB:*evil yet knowing smile*
AN/IDK: *returns said smile*))

Test tube's P.O.V
I walked Paintbrush back down to the experiment room, relishing the earlier positivity, although slightly disliking it.
Don't get close to the subjects, remember?
I shook the thought away, I should be able to enjoy some time down here. Like Paintbrush had said earlier.

"I'm not sure if this helps, but maybe lighten up a little? I'm sure the terrible state of this place couldn't ruin that much, right? Just clean up a bit, take a breather, relax. You kinda need it by the looks of it."

I made a few mental notes after that;

One, clean up and stop living like such a slob. I'm pretty sure the both of us know that microwave noodles and recycled water isn't that healthy a diet to have after being underground and away from exercise and natural sunlight for over a year.
Two, stop looking so vulnerable. Clearly my illness has started be become noticable.
Three, something must've happened between Paintbrush and Lightbulb. Now Paintbrush has a much more 'look on the bright side' yet pragmatic approach to things, while Lightbulb had started to become much more short-tempered and argues more much than Paintbrush does, who now tries to avoid conflict apparently,

"I never ask for the arguments and constant snapping at each other, but apologising seems like a pretty odd move to make, especially now, y'know?"
I shook my head, reality began to rush back to me as soon as I approached the experiment room door.
Don't get close.. Don't get close.. Pull yourself together Test tube..
I opened the door to see Fan lying down next to Lightbulb. They were both staring into the one-way mirror and pretending to doodle in the air.
I yawned as I stepped aside and let Paintbrush in, it must've been getting late.

I just need this one. Come on..

"Subject 1?" I called. She stared at Paintbrush, then me, then quickly hugged Fan and stood up. Fan didn't even try to make eye contact with me.
After Lightbulb elbowed Paintbrush on the way out she started heading for the interview room, strangely knowing the way off by heart.
We sat down, I told her no one would hear what we said, and we started.
"Where do you think your previous attitude has come from?" I asked her.
"Why? Does it bother you?" She replied, raising her eyebrow.
"This is all for research purposes."
"Ah yes. Your research. Of course!"
"Come on, one."

"Ugh" She spat, she also hated it when I used her number.
I gave her 'the stare'. The one I gave people so that they knew their place. She didn't look phased, but she did start giving me answers.
"Maybe from the, 'recent discovery' that it doesn't matter what I do. I'm stuck down here still I rot to death, or die from starvation."
"So, giving up..?"
She looked taken aback, her stance suddenly became defensive.
"Well, not exactly. Just from the feeling that.. uh.." The light of realisation seemed to rush back into her body. "Shoot-"
"And Fan." I interrupted before she turned this interview into a therapy session. "What's suddenly drawn you to him?"
"Well the kid's defenseless. Someone's 'otta stand up for him.." She said, completely relaxing in her chair.
"He really looks up to you, you know that right?"
"It's nice, he's really nice. He's the only good thing in this horrible excuse for a lab."
"And Paintbrush, what's happened betwee-"
"Oh please. Weeee're Lightbulb and Paaaiintbrush!! We just argue 'till we drop and there's nothing else to it." She smiled evilly to herself, although her expression did drop a little bit. Then her eyes flickered with anger and fear, "Paintbrush is just an arrogant menace. Someday they're gonna get us all killed because they couldn't see past their own ego."

I stared at Lightbulb, eyes wide with shock. That was something I had never imagined hearing, especially through Lightbulb's strong masculine accent.
Soon, the interview finished. I was exhausted. I could hardly remember how to put one foot in front of another. Although Lightbulb insisted on walking back to the room on her own I followed her there and made sure she couldn't dash off and leave.

When she got back to the room she ran over to Fan and hugged him tight, comforting him quietly.
Without making eye contact with anyone, I closed the door and stumbled back to my room.
I sat down at my desk and took my pills, silently cursing my illness for coming at such an inconvenient time.
Just a few more days.. or weeks.. just hold on..

28: Puzzle Pieces

Log Date 1567: Today was a creative day. Was a bit disappointed... sickeningly disappointed. Ill be sure to.. get a little more creative for the next test. Something tells me it's going to get.. darker around here. I can't shake that feeling. I really need to though.

Test tube's P.O.V

I rub my hands together, the energy from my excitement keeping me awake.
And maybe my fifth coffee.
Today would definitely, let's say, "change the game."
I figured it's about time my test subjects started to do some physical activity, wouldn't want them to cripple down here too. Well, that'd be an interesting side effect to study. Not today though. This experiment would be more for me to see how well they can co-operate together, especially...
..Irrationally

Lightbulb's P.O.V

My eyes slowly opened, the world finally seemed to blur into vision. For once I wasn't needed to jerk awak-

"Gob2Q= mb3JuaQ= =ng sdQ= =bjects!!"

The speakers screeched with an unfamiliar hiss. Fan jumped with a loud yell while Paintbrush got up and almost lost their balance. I dug my fingers into the ground to relieve the pain of the eardrum-killing monsters. Soft button sounds emerged from the speaker.

"Oh my bad. It's been a while since I used this. Anyhow..
Good morning subjects! Today I have a rather *thrilling* experiment for you!!"

Test tube's hyper tone made my stomach turn to stone. I felt concern rising in my throat so I ran to the window, shoving Paintbrush aside in the process.
"You think you can just hide behind that window buddy?!" I yelled, "Come out and-"

"Now you might feel a little bit tired after this, but sleep is not permitted. You have to stay awake. Enjoy!"

I turned back, Fan's confused yet worried stare pulled me over to him. I hugged him tight, bracing ourselves for whatever Test tube had coming. Paintbrush drew a confident position, although I could see their glare shaking. It was at that moment I kind of missed what Paintbrush and I had. I guess I didn't realise how much I enjoy just being a part of their charade. It was nice, just laughing along to their ridiculous fits.

But in between my thoughts, I heard a hissing sound, as if something was being released into the air. I got up to see what it was, but drowsiness clogged my vision, and my thought. Suddenly, I could feel my whole body dropping. My steps were clumsy until eventually I had no choice but to fall to my knees and weakly cough.
I felt like I was dying, but I was just tired.

"Uggghhhh" I groaned, not that I wanted to, my brain was just so sloppy from being so tired
Even still, if I lied down I probably wouldn't be able to sleep.
Weird.

I turned around to check on Fan, although the first thing I saw with Paintbrush. As much shock as I felt, I was more confused. Paintbrush was crying, absolutely wasted in their sadness. Fat tears rolled down their face, though they didn't make a sound. Quite poetic if you think about it, which I wasn't in the mood to do. Fan was laughing hysterically, still that scared smile plastered onto his face. He looked more insane than amused if I'm being honest. I chuckled, without knowing why. Soon chuckles turned to giggles, then to laughing, and soon I was laughing ridiculously too. I held my stomach and fell over without a care in the world, although the pain in my back from my awkward sleeping posture was back to get me.

In enough time, the room was filled with psychotic laughter, even Paintbrush was laughing through their tears. Fan, who I'm guessing was so worn-out he couldn't comprehend anything, latched onto Paintbrush, who was also on the floor, laughing and crying.

Summoning whatever I had left of my conscience I chuckled,
"Wow. Look at us. We could only get along if we were all as drowsy as drunk!"
Which made Paintbrush laugh even harder, whether it was from that painful realisation or if they just found it as funny as I did, I don't really care.
The room howled for ages, and then everything felt silent.
And then the world went black.

Test tube's P.O.V

I opened the door, glancing upon my unconscious subjects. The idea of having little lab rats to test whatever I wanted to on filled me with a sick joy. I pranced around the room, humming and setting up my activity for the day.
Oh, this is going to be exciting!

Lightbulb's P.O.V

The world finally spun into view. Gray and green twisted and whirled together, making me kinda sick. I still fell under the effects of the smoke from earlier, but I didn't feel as bad. It was kind of a shame though, laughing without a care in the world is the most free I've ever felt in a long time. And I've died.

Paintbrush sat up next, scratching their head in confusion. Suddenly they saw me, and instead of being mad or lashing out, they looked hurt and scared. I hadn't even done anything!!.. But.. I felt so guilty...

"Ugghh—" Paintbrush groaned, dusting themself off, "What the heelll..?"
"Hey, you." I said stopping to hiccup, Paintbrush looked at me, surprised.
"Wh- Me??" They replied, puzzled.
"Yeah you. What got into you?" I muttered, hugging my knees.
"What got into you?" They remarked, but instead of rambling on

about some 'stupid idea I had', they just stopped and waited for a reply. I opened my mouth to snap at them, but I couldn't say anything. I say there with my mouth and open and nothing to say

(mb/an : she's got nothing to share, nah she's got nothing to saaaayyy)

I sighed and sat up,
"I was mad, *really* mad. I hate it here and I thought you knew that. I got out of here and it was good enough, I was free or something.." I half mumbled to myself, not looking at Paintbrush.
"Well I'm mad at you because I spent all that time building that machine and working with the kid to get you back and you just attacked me." Paintbrush whimpered, trying not to raise their voice, "And then when you acted rude, I wanted to be rude back. Duh."

I stared at them, my expression colder than I would've liked it.
"Dude." I said, burying my eyes in my arm to stop the tears,
"Y-You what..?"
"I said, I worked hard on that machine to bring you back, I just wanted you back I swear-"
"You did..-" I sniffed, a sad smile on my face as I looked up at them.

"You missed me, huh..?"

Fan's P.O.V

"I'm up!! I'm up!!" I stood up against whatever was shaking me, my legs felt like jelly as they dragged against the ground. As my vision began to blur into perspective, I realised that Lightbulb was crouched over me, staring deep into my eyes. I let out a scream of surprise.
"Y-Yeah? You alright?" I panicked with my words. I'm used to leaning on her, sure, but being right in top of me when I wake up is something else, but that's off topic—

"Where are we? What's going on?" I began to scream, getting up and walking in circles.
"Paper kid don't sweat it. Just wait for the evil green thing to yell at us through the int-"

"Intercom??"

The intercom screeched again, before Test tube dialed it down again.

"My bad. Technology now a days haha!Anywho, your activity for today!
I've set up a number of small puzzles in your room, each of them simple puzzle that will require team skills. Once you finish every puzzle the door will open and you will be free to leave the room."

"leAVE THE ROOM?!" Lightbulb and I screamed in unison.
This is huge! This is our ticket outta here! I mean, obviously she has some security measure up her sleeve, but that's nothing Lightbulb can't handle! We're finally gonna be out of here!
I rubbed my hands together schemingly
It's showtime, baby.

Puzzle by puzzle, passive aggressive comment by compliment, we worked through each puzzle, not always as a group, but when we tried to be we were... ok..-

"Oh for gosh sakes you can't put a square in the middle the riddle says its to the left of-"
"It doesn't matter what the riddle says because it should align with the other puzzles to-"
"Yeah like that's the better explanation-"
"Honestly are we not over this-"

Lightbulb and Paintbrush continued to bicker and argue, but I can tell they're warming up to each other, even just a bit.

I was having my own fun on a particular puzzle when Paintbrush called me over.
"Hey, Paper kid, come here for a sec." They said, their tone expressionless as they threw the words over their shoulder.
"Wh- M-M-Me?" I turned around, too excited to speak. Paintbrush is trusting me! I can't blow this!
"Umm, yeah? Last time I checked there was only one Paper." They rolled their eyes. I shakily ran over to Paintbrush's side of the room to see what they needed.
"I need you to move those little knob things, they're so tiny."

"These ones?" I fastened my grip around one of the few tiny knobs in the puzzle box. As soon as I did, everything felt outlined. The entire puzzle started to make sense to me.
"Great. Now moves those-"
"There... do that... alter that... mmm.." I began to fiddle with the knobs.
"Hey! Watch it ki-"

I continued to switch and turns the knobs, when something snapped behind me. Lightbulb whipped around to face the source of the noise as the room door shuddered. Paintbrush lit up and ran towards the door.
We held our breaths. Waiting for it to drop open so we could run and be free.

All this time. Finally. Fresh air. Food. Friends. Comfort-

It fell.

Lightbulb's P.O.V

Can't waste this-
I began to run through the door, wind wisking past me and I charged past everything I had ever known. At once my life started to build together, I felt free. I was free! I wa-
Crash.
I stopped moving.
My head rung with pain, I opened my eyes and flinched at the sight.
"What? But the door.."
The door was closed.. right in front of me. But it made no sense! I saw it open! I ran right through it! How can that happen?!

I looked behind me, to see a very disappointed Paintbrush and Fan standing inside the doorway of a backroom. It was our room, just a different part of it.
Upset, I banged on the glass,
"FOR GODS SAKE, TWISTED TUBE!!! YOU FREAKING LIAR YOU-"

"I never lied, 1. I simply said you'd be 'free to leave the room', not free to leave my lab.."

I froze. Hands weak with shame and disappointment. I lifted my hand to my face in a soft facepalm and slid down the wall. I took deep disappointed breaths as Fan walked over to sit besides me. By the time I took my hand down, Fan was asleep on me. He snored softly, so it was less draining and more adorable. I smiled and I pat his arm, still disappointed and crushed, but at ease at least.

Then, Paintbrush sat down next to me. They didn't make eye contact, they just slid down beside me, the same feeling in their shaking legs and hands. Looking at them made me feel like Lightbulb again, I had the opportunity to be Ms.Bright Personality again, I could choose to be positive, but could I really..?

I stared forwards, not making eye contact with them, but acknowledging their existence on the side.
"Hey.." I finally choked out the words, Paintbrush looked at me instantly.
"Yeah..?" They replied calmly.
"Thanks."
"For what?"
My eyes welled up with tears as I took their hand.
"Everything."

Test tube's P.O.V

Huh.
I stared through my monitor as I took my pills. Both shocked and disappointed from the result.
I guess it was a lose-lose for everyone.. Hmm..
I slumped back in my chair. I really thought someone was gonna beat someone else up, I had my first aid kit and everything... *God, now that I listen to that out loud, I really am becoming a monster.. huh..*

I stood up and walked around just to keep my legs from crippling.

Alright then.. maybe instead of just giving them activity.. I can make them useful for something.. make them my lab rats? Why else would they be here..?

I have a feeling this next test is going to very.. very...

Interesting

29: Topple

Log Date 1568: I have decided on an.. inhumane challenge today. If all goes the way I plan, things will be much more exciting around here. Edit:... things did not go as plan. It went worse than planned.

Lightbulb's P.O.V

It'd been a week since we almost got out. I sat and drew picture in the dust. Pictures of eggs and pizzas, and whatever else I could imagine from my time on the surface. Fan was asleep and Paintbrush was staring at the one way mirror. I quietly shuffled over to them, wanting comfort.

If there's one thing that this whole experiment had done for me, it was make me appreciate what I got. I didn't know how good I had it with life before it was gone. I didn't understand the value Paintbrush had to me before we had to start again. And now I'm scared to be lonely.
I pulled up next to them. They lifted their eyebrows in surprise and moved over to make room for me.

"Thanks." I said, trying awkwardly to avoid eye contact. They politely nodded in response.
"Is your head ok?" They asked casually. I still hadn't gotten used to that.
"M-My head?" I replied cluelessly,
"From when you ran into the door?"
"Oh yeah, that. Gosh, how long ago was that?"
"Beats me. Time flies when you're stuck in a white room all day."
They chuckled. I laughed with them. Being normal with them felt so different.
"But yeah, my head's fine."
"Better than that time Marsh smashed it in I'm guessing?" They added

humorously. I laughed.

"Goosshh, don't even remind me!" I shoved their arm playfully. I realised at that moment how weird it must be to laugh about nearly dying.

"What do you think Marsh and Apple are doing now?" Paintbrush asked blankly. They looked further up the window.
"Let's pray they're not killing each other." I smiled.
"Hey! Language!"
"Sorry! Sorry!"
We laughed for a bit, and then we just stared at each other.
"I miss what we had." I finally said. Paintbrush didn't reply, but I could sense their agreement. Then we sat there and stared at the window.

Finally, the door fell. Test tube walked through.
"Ah, at least no one is burning anyone else alive!" She giggled psychotically. Paintbrush shook their hand, disinterested in Test tube's joke. The scientist cleared her throat. "Well you all know the drill, come on."

I turned around, ignoring Test tube's threatening gaze, and went to go wake up Fan.
"Buddy?" I said softly, I had learnt that by now, the best way to get him up was just by a gentle shrug.

"Buddy come on. Wake u-"
Crash
Something smacked the wall next to us, making me scream. This made Fan to wake up with a jolt. He panted and shaked, slowly grabbing my hand and squeezing it. Enraged, I looked for the source of the sound, only to find Test tube blankly standing over me.

"Good he's up!" Test tube smiled. I stared at her, completely disgusted.
Who does she think she is? She thinks she can just snap her fingers and have everything her way.
Not if I have anything to do with it..

Fan's P.O.V

We got led down the hallway. My body was violently shaking so I clinged to Lightbulb, who took me under her arm. Although she comforted me, her gaze was strong with anticipation, her fist was tightly clutched. I squeezed her arm, she didn't flinch.

Paintbrush led, keeping their distance from Test tube. I could even feel Test tube's anticipation, which was something I thought I wouldn't see in Test tube again.
Emotion.

Finally she entered a room. A giant room. It was like our room but instead of white pads it was just metal. I glanced around the room, it was almost empty. Apart from the small wood table near the back of the room. I peered at Test tube from behind Lightbulb, cringing at her sinister smirk.

"This has to be one of my favourites yet!" She said, stretching her arms. That was my first red flag, Test tube acting normal and casual. She wasn't meant to do that, was she? The other was the fact she was excited, for obvious reasons. She examined us all, I noticed how her expression dropped as she laid her eyes on me.

"Today's experiment is surely gonna put your teamwork and efficiency to the test. It's something that practically I find inhumaine! But are any of us even human anymore?"

Her eyebrow raised in a rhetorical question. Lightbulb took a step forward, Paintbrush put a gentle hand on her shoulder. She looked at the taller with reluctant eyes, then stepped back. Test tube took Paintbrush's hand, making them flinch. She examined their eyes, then pushed something into their hand. They looked down, although her hand still covered their palm.

"Today.. in this room.. I want you.." She said in a hoarse whisper. She tore her hand away in a dramatic matter,
"To build a tower using these."

Lightbulb ran over to Paintbrush as Test tube left the room.
"Don't forget the flag when you're done!" She said before the door

snapped shut behind her.
Paintbrush groaned with a mixture of relief and aggravation.
Lightbulb looked over their shoulder and frowned.

"She.. wants us to build a card tower?" I stumbled behind her, catching a glance of the playing cards packet. Lightbulb crossed her arms.
"Well, it's cards! It doesn't involve much. How hard could it be?" She smiled, the bags under her eyes showing, "Has anyone done this before?"
"I have." Paintbrush raised their hand, "I hated it."
"Jesus.." Lightbulb dragged her hand over her eyes and down to her nose, pinching it. I took the cards and opened them on the table. My hands were shaking from how weak with hunger and sleep-deprived I was.

Paintbrush and Lightbulb joined me.
"You wanna get us started?" She looked at Paintbrush. Paintbrush leaned down and grabbed two cards.
"Normally-" They said while fiddling skillfully with the cards. "you try to get them to stand like that. Then you can add floors, which just go on top like this." They placed one card on top of their tiny demonstration. It stood still. Lightbulb and I applauded them as they smiled to themself. Lightbulb tried to set hers' up next to Paintbrush's, which collapsed, pulling Paintbrush's down with it.

She let out a staccato growl. Paintbrush leaned next to her and put their hands on Lightbulb's.
"Crap, your hands are shaky." They sighed. Lightbulb went a soft red from the sudden contact. "C'mon, this won't build itself."
I shuffled next to Lightbulb with a few cards in hand. She chuckled defenselessly.
"I love you morons."

~~timeskip ; undetermined amount of time later~~

The tower fluttered down for the twelth time. Paintbrush threw their fists against the table and Lightbulb stood up to yell,
"God I'd rather fight a rat!" She screamed. Paintbrush and I looked at each other with mutual disagreement. I put my head against the table and let out a small sigh.

"My head hurts.." I said, not expecting a response. Lightbulb sat down and cracked her knuckles.
"C-C-C-Come on, c-c-c-come on, let's go.." She muttered to herself, like some sort of cheer. She stacked a few cards up next to each other. Lightbulb was starting to get the hang of it, but her quick temper normally led her to getting frustrated.

I was great at getting them to stand up but I took a while, quality over quantity. Paintbrush went at their own pace and was the line between Lightbulb and I. We would get incredibly close to using up all the cards before they all fell down as if being hit with a canon.

Suddenly, the tower began to grow. We finally made it to two floors. Lightbulb was ecstatic and Paintbrush was determined to succeed. We developed a system and worked as if our lives depended on it. Knowing this new Test tube, it probably does.

I was ready to put more cards together when the realisation hit me. I turned to Paintbrush and Lightbulb with a smile and held up the last card.
Lightbulb walked away from the table and danced a bit. I smiled as I saw the old Lightbulb in her steps, the Lightbulb that took a situation and made it into a game. I carefully handed the card over to Paintbrush who looked at the tower.

"Guys, look at what we did." Their eyes shone with admiration. Lightbulb walked over to them and held their hand. They put the card down on the table for a brief second and looked over at Lightbulb. I leaned over to see what they were doing, not daring to even breathe on the table.
Paintbrush chuckled quietly to themself, making Lightbulb give them a questioning glance.
"W-What? I got something on my face?" She asked. Paintbrush leaned closer to her and gave her a quick squeeze, but ended up not letting go. Lightbulb just froze, but slowly hugged back. Paintbrush started laughing, then let her go with a slight smile.

I watch with hands over my mouth as Lightbulb paced up and down the room mumbling inaudible words, but her expression said everything. She smiled shyly at Paintbrush, sharing the same bright glee as they did. I giggled and elbowed Paintbrush, signalling for

them to put the card on top. They happily, which made me smile like a big dork. I was so happy. For once I wasn't just happy for survival but happy because everyone else was actually,
Happy.

Paintbrush put the card on top. Lightbulb and I clapped as they got up and bowed.
"Thank you, thank you!" Paintbrush said proudly, waving their hand, "I honestly couldn't of done it without you guys."
Lightbulb went 'awww', and I gave them a grateful smile.

Lightbulb walked over to Paintbrush and confidently went into their hold, become a partial armrest. I giggled a bit more.
"Lightbulb!" They chuckled, grinning. She just turned her head and laughed.

I felt a rush of hope and suddenly I just wanted to be back in the white room. I wanted to stay like this forever and we finally did it. We finally made each other happy. I looked at the card tower with pride as I waited to Test tube to escort us back to the room.
Then we heard a hiss. We all turned to face a tiny patch in the ground that was making way for some sort of.. machine?

Lightbulb and Paintbrush jumped back as I scrambled behind the table. Then the patch gave way to a tiny flag.
I smiled as the tension in the room loosened. Lightbulb sighed, then giggled embarrassedly and walked up to the card and grabbed it. But then she couldn't get off the ground.
"Lightbulb?" I asked her. She began to grunt in pain.
"Lightbulb wha—"
"teST TUBE YOU PSYCHO WHAT'VE YOU DONE NOW?!"

My eyes widened as my heart tried to break out of my rib cage. Test tube's door hissed to reveal herself. I ran over to Lightbulb, who had her hand stuck in a handcuff against the ground with Paintbrush trying to break her out. They both screamed at Test tube, their voices too jumbled to comprehend.

"Enough!" Test tube said, grabbing Paintbrush by the wrist and walking towards them. They tried to throw her off but their arms were shaking from exhaustion.

"Test tube!" I screamed, running after them. I was determined to not let her hurt anyone else. The sight of her even making someone back up made me cringe.

Still holding Paintbrush's wrist, they grabbed me and threw me back at Lightbulb, while trying desperately to be gentle. I crashed into her as she tried to get back up. She had gotten too tired to finish her escape attempt, so instead she watched Test tube daringly, as if her gaze would judge her every step.

Paintbrush was trying to pull on Test tube's arm to free themself, but Test tube still stared dead at Paintbrush.
"What the hell are you doing?! Are you mental?! I mean you probably are but this is a new mental-!"

"Paintbrush, Paintbrush.. calm." She said, ignoring Paintbrush's panicked stare.
"W-What are you gonna do, huh?! Kill me!? Gonna... take my bones and.. run experiments on them?!" Paintbrush was too frightened to think straight. Their legs shook as Test tube held their arm, relaxing. Paintbrush finally settled down.

"I'm not going to hurt you two.." Her expression was.. wholehearted..? "That's not what I want to do anymore. Not to you." Paintbrush was clearly taken aback by her statement, their shoulders tensed.
"G-Go on?"
"Well, over the past interviews and days I've been examining you, I've noticed some.. well.. similarities." She said, confidently making eye contact with Paintbrush. "I could find myself in you, in your character. The way you solved situations and spoke to people I.. I connected with you." She spoke with certainty. Paintbrush's mouth was wide open. "And now, I want to continue working with you."

"W-What?!"
"Four." Test tube took a step forward, making Paintbrush step back. She held her hands up to Paintbrush's chest, still squeezing their hands. "Come work with me! In the lab! We can analyse data together and stay up late together.. and help each othe—"

"You're a sociopath!" They screamed in her face, making her flinch

backwards, "You go ahead and torture me and my friends for months, and expect me to play scientist with you?!"
"They're my friends too!" Test tube argued, regaining dominance.
"Yeah, because when you have friends you lock them up in a room until they kill each other!"
"I didn't mean it like that!"
"You let us suffer down here.." Paintbrush's face darkened, "You let innocent objects die because you failed them!"
"And so did you!" She screamed back in Paintbrush's face, freezing them from shock.

"Marshmallow died because of you Paintbrush! But she died because of me too! Why can't you see we're exactly the same?!"
"The same?! The same?!!" They argued, raising their voice so that it echoed off the walls for minutes. "The fact that you can even compare me to the monster you are! And after all I've been through! Weeks, months without food or a proper place to sleep—"
"And you think I get that?!"
"You have access to it!"
"I've lived on 2 minute noodles since this whole thing started! I can't remember the last month I slept in!"
"I—"

"We're the same, two! We both want to avoid conflict. We both want to achieve something bigger than ourselves! We both know what it's like to deal with people who just won't listen!"
"Hey!" Lightbulb yelled.
"We have so much in common! Temper, sanity, dignity.. it's us. We're so similar four! Work with me!" Test tube squeezed their hands.
Paintbrush just stared back at Test tube horror stricken.
"Y-You.." Paintbrush tore their gaze away from Test tube. "That would mean.. no more white room..?"

"NO! PLEASE!" Paintbrush and Test tube whipped their heads around to face Lightbulb as she kicked at her handcuff. "You're the only thing keeping me sane in this hellhole! Please Paintbrush!" She pleaded through tears. Her voice dropped to a silent scream, "Please don't leave me, Painty."
Paintbrush's eyes lifted as their thoughts battled each other.
"Paintbrush come on! For us!" I pleaded, my heart beating in my ears,

"W-We need you so much, you're stronger than everyone a-and.." I was sweating beyond belief. My hands shook and I felt like I couldn't hear myself. I looked up to fix my sight on Test tube's regretful frown. My jaw dropped a bit at the sight. She snapped her head back to Paintbrush, who she had backed up to a wall.
"You got to listen to me! After a year or so down here what do you think you'd possibly know?" Test tube lowered her voice.

Paintbrush looked at her and then back at Lightbulb. I shuffled over to Test tube and grabbed her leg.
"You got to listen to us!" I pleaded. She looked down at me with sorrow, before twitching again and kicking me to the ground. My arm rang with pain. I screamed.
I saw Paintbrush run over to me, only to get dragged back by Test tube's grasp. This time, Test tube was struggling to keep Paintbrush's arm. Test tube finally started to fight back as they were lost in a tackle.

"I'm the only one who understands you!"
"You don't know anything about me! I'm nothing like you! I'm..!" Paintbrush screeched in protest, now scratching Test tube's wrist.
"I'm being logical while you're just killing us all!"
Test tube's eyes glinted with a defensive fire. Suddenly, Test tube had her leg up against Paintbrush's hip. She pulled violently on their arm. They yelled in pain. They slapped her and tried to throw her off. Pushing her, kicking her.

Then the room echoed with a snap.

Happy Birthday! (A/N)

Guess what y'all! It's officially the birthday of Experiment 21!

I published Experiment 21 on April 27th, 2018. It was just a small side project that I worked on during spring break and as a slight vent project.

I never expected it to get big, to get popular. I was writing it for myself (Good tip to getting popular, don't force it, just let it happen and do it for yourself uwu).

Yet here we are, one year later. And I'm so thankful to everyone of you reading this.

Yes, you. Right there behind the screen.

Thank you for everything you've done for my series. I swear I've been blessed with the best fans!
Y'all are all so talented and nice! I love y'all so much and am so very thankful

So this chapter is a shout-out to y'all!

Thank you all so much uwu

Happy Birthday Exp.21!

- IDKSomethingOrOther

30: Cracked Ceiling

Log Date 1569: Another one gone. I should've.. thought this through. I should've done something. I should've not have gotten attached. There's nothing else for them. I..
Forget it. It's not worth noting down. I'll note something important down about this later.
I've got medication to take.

Test Tube's P.O.V:

I'm honestly not sure who was the first one to scream. But there was screaming, lots of it. Of course.. I'm used to that. But it took me a second to realize why. It was almost like time had slowed down and nothing was happening at all. That's when I saw them.

Paintbrush, dangling from my hold. But only by the top half. The rest of them had snapped in half and was on the floor, bleeding like the rest of them. I thought for sure they'd scream, or at least die while at my grasp.. but they didn't. They just stared with wide eyes as they shook and bled out.

"...Wh..wha.. How... Wh..why..."

That's when I remembered.
Shock takes at least five to ten minutes to kill someone, and blood loss takes about seven. They wouldn't die instantly, nothing had affected their head and their heart was definitely still beating. I finally zoned back in to hear the terrified screams of Fan and Lightbulb continuously thrashing against the floor to try to stop me, try to escape.

"HOW COULD YOU?! 'NEVER MURDER SOMEONE BY MY OWN HAND' YOU SAID! WELL LOOK WHAT HAPPENED!"

She screeched. All of the screaming was overwhelming, so I dropped

Paintbrush and stumbled back. The hollow noise of their top half hitting and splashing on the ground made me nauseous. Obviously there was nothing we could do but stare. I didn't have time to leave and try to keep them alive. Even if I did, there was no way to fix a break like that without surgery. There just wasn't enough time.

Eventually I heard metal tearing and breaking, making it obvious Lightbulb had finally escaped. She ran to Paintbrush with a pained expression that curses my thoughts.
It always will.
"Painty! Oh my god.. oh my god what did she do to you.."
"...I..."

Their shaking worsened as they started hacking and coughing up blood. There was internal damage by them hitting the floor with no flesh or muscle to protect their entrails. Wood splinters stabbing and sticking out of them also most likely wouldn't help. I just silently watched Lightbulb's expression, seeing if she could tell there was nothing that either of us could do to save them. She seemed panicked, just holding them and not caring about how much blood she got on herself. They continued to cough until I was sure they'd pass out. But once again, they seemed to refuse to die. They were determined to live, to fight death until they truly lost. It was obvious by how their breathing continued to rapidly rise then slow in a flux they were fighting their demise, and seeing Lightbulb's eyes darken she realized just that.. There was nothing any of us could do to save them.

A quiet wail from behind us let me know Fan had realized that too.

Lightbulbs P.O.V:

...I couldn't save them.

She couldn't save them, Fan couldn't save them, nothing here could save them. I saw Painty fighting it. Fighting so hard to not let... *her* win.
But they had to. I couldn't just.. let them suffer like that. I couldn't kill them.. I couldn't kill someone else.. but I could try to talk them down and out of it. They couldn't run forever. Especially not as their blood leaks out onto the cold floor and the infections slowly start to

creep in

"...Painty.. please.."
I held their hand and tried to reason with them.
"...I... I... I... won't..."
"...You have to..."
"...Won't.."
"Do you not understand..? You have to... there's nothing left for you here.. you're toast and you know it..."

They started to answer me, but started coughing violently again. I felt the urge to vomit as I watched their bloody intestines clench up as they coughed, seemingly gathering blood from there to cough into their hand and all over their arm. It's not the blood that bothers me anymore.. I've seen enough of it to where it doesn't bother me. It's the fact I can see inside them. See the things that aren't supposed to be visible.

Then they smiled lightly, their eyes shining as they weakly looked up at me. The chuckle they gave me was bone chilling, both because of how weak they were and because of how familiar it was.

"You.. never change... do you?"
I squeezed their hand tighter to fight my urge to cry.
"...Let go. You're not suffering here like I did."
"I wouldn't exactly say suffer-"
"...More of learn how to t-tackle new.. experiences.."

I heard a quiet tone speak from behind me, so I snapped around and stared at her. She slowly got quieter noticing that I not only was looking at her, but was holding a death glare.
"..Why are you even still here? You want to watch them suffer and struggle like you've been doing for the past.. god knows how long!" I snapped, squeezing Painty harder, wishing the guts in front of me were her's.
"Year and a half."
"...you're disgusting. Leave. You have a viewing window.. I-I'll scream when they're done."

For once, Test Tube looked conflicted. Her gaze flickered from me to Painty, then to Fan who was balled up terrified in the corner. I

couldn't blame the kid, I want to do the same thing. But I couldn't. She sighed, then went to the back of the room. Obviously she wanted to stick around to see Paintbrush die, or get closer to them, but I wasn't about to let her. She's not allowed to suddenly have remorse and sympathy now.

Paintbrush went into another bloody coughing fit, and started violently shaking while wheezing. I flinched feeling them grip onto me, the color draining from my expression. Fan wailed quietly again behind me, and we all knew. They couldn't fight blood loss like that anymore. They were good as dead, we all knew that. There was a heavy sigh from Test Tube behind me, which made me want to punch her. She'd shatter, and all of this would be over.

But no. She deserves to suffer, she was the only one there who did, and from experience I know that watching someone you care about suffer is one of the most brutal punishments ever. Besides.. that wouldn't undo anything. When I looked down back at Painty, they were slumped with dull eyes. Almost.. almost...

"...Letting go..?"
"...N-n.."
"...Please.. rest.."
They sighed shakily, relaxing and closing their eyes.
"...We're here.. goodnight.. Painty.."

And just like that
It was over.
They were dead. Leaving only the rotten awful scent of exposed entrails, blood, and oak wood. I wanted to set the place on fire, like they would have wanted to do. I turned to Test Tube, shakily speaking.

"...I-it's done.. you can go..."
"...I still have to clean up the body.. that scent-"
"..Leave them. Do it later. I don't care.. just.. leave already."

She groaned quietly, but went. Leaving us in this new.. grey room. Then I felt tears prick my eyes. They didn't get to die in the white room. For once, for once, for once, for once. They didn't die in the white room. They got the cracked patterns of the cement ceiling to

stare at as they died. No cursed white padding. They were free. By both death, and that they were out of the room. Somehow, that's what made me start crying. Not death, not the blood, not the fact I knew I was going to die down here alone.
A cracked cement ceiling.
I heard Fan sniffling and quietly creeping towards me, so I sat down with a slump and let him.

"...n-now what.. are we.. supposed t-to do..?"
"...we get the hell out of here."
"...but-"
"I know what you're thinking.. and you're probably right. But I'm not giving up this time..."

And with that, we sat there and cried. Together

All three of us.

Fan's P.O.V

It was too disturbing.
I couldn't remember shaking more in my life.
It was worse than Apple's death.
For me, it's nothing but a bloody haze. But either way, I can remember the moment vividly. I still remember how the floor seemed to intensify after the snap. Gravity intensified. Then all I could see was.. them. In half.
I couldn't look, but I couldn't look away. It was hard to believe that Paintbrush of everyone would just... go.

Then there was yelling, the same yelling. The yelling from when Lightbulb had lost it. She sat down with Paintbrush and then it was all a blur. A blur of blood and tears.
Then it was harder to believe. It was hard to believe that Paintbrush was fighting to stay alive, but it also made perfect sense.

"Paintbrush come on! For us!" I pleaded, my heart beating in my ears, "W-We need you so much, you're stronger than everyone a-and.."

"..and I needed you.." I whispered. My hand squeezed Paintbrush's side, sending them into another coughing fit. I quickly removed it,

then looked at Test tube.

"..let go.."
"..n-n.."

That's all I can remember from Paintbrush. Everything apart from their final breath. A shaking, brutal breath that still keeps me up at night to this day. I just stared at them in disbelief. Telling myself over and over again, this isn't happening.

"...I-it's done.. you can go..."
"...I still have to clean up the body.. that scent-"
"..Leave them. Do it later. I don't care.. just.. leave already."

I looked up. Lightbulb's eyes were dull with grief. She hardly looked at Test tube, only acknowledging her with a vague glance over her shoulder. Test tube, however, was fully in shock. I could tell that by the way she was standing this was not what she wanted. Her body was shaking beyond belief. Everything about those 13 minutes felt like an hour.

A haunted hour.
Then Test tube left, and it was just me, Lightbulb and the corpse of our best friend. Our hero. I crawled over to Lightbulb, needing her. I don't care what she thought about Paintbrush, I don't care about what they said to me,
We needed them.

"...N-now what.. are we.. supposed t-to do..?"
I fell onto her softly, eyes half closed.
"...We get the hell out of here."
I looked at her, surprised. Her recent low energy was replaced with a kind of menacing glint. Her eyes conjured up plans beyond escape routes.
"...But-"
"I know what you're thinking.. and you're probably right. But I'm not giving up this time..."
Her first was clenched so tightly I thought she'd tear right through it. I looked at her, then down at Paintbrush again.

"Don't let the bed bugs bite.."

31: Momento Mori

Log Date 1570: This isn't something I can keep ignoring. Now that the plans been disrupted I'm.. I'm not sure if I can even keep this going. It's either they die or I do at this point. Dying.. that's what this about. That's what this has always been about.. hasn't it? Ha-

Test Tube's P.O.V

I stared blankly at the keys of my computer as I paused at the log date. The space on the screen continued to blink, tempting me to continue writing. Mocking me. I had so much more to say, so much more to scream, but I just.. couldn't. This was for researches sake, not some personal diary. But it felt like it. It felt so heart achingly personal. All of this felt like if it were jeopardized, I would just collapse. I've worked so hard to have all of this succeed and now look at it. Everything's going up in the flames despite having survived at least three literal fires. Three.. fires..

I winced and put a hand up to the side of my face as another flash of their fate ran through my sight. Nonsense. That's all it was. They died for the experiment and that's it. All of this guilt and nagging feeling is merely just nonsense. It wasn't my fault. They weren't listening. None of this is my fault. But.. if it's not mine.. then who exactly do I have to blame for this..?

I hesitantly glanced back at the screen, before pushing away from my desk in frustration. There were such better things I could be doing right now then philosophy. Which while equally interesting, not what I needed to do right now. What I needed to do right now was write that letter. I quickly squeezed my eyes shut to try and avoid seeing them again, but that just made it worse. Their blood spreading across the floor as I dragged them to the vault with others. Their organs dragging and scraping across the floor. The betrayed dull look on their face. I gasped as I opened my eyes again, gripping the edge of

the armrests on my chair quietly as I looked back through the viewing window. I'll write it later. Not like anyone actually sits and waits for them to arrive.

1 and 3 just sat there talking to each other. That's right. The room shouldn't be empty, you moved them last week. God.. was it last week..? I can't even remember at this point. All I care about this point is surviving. That's the goal. The entire point, to survive. To see how someone reacts to certain experiences. Even death. This wasn't just about death, it's about how someone feels. That's right. The brain, the most interesting cognitive tool we could've ever been blessed with. Blessing.. ha. Sure. Like I want to keep remembering that scene over and over again.. like I want to worry about what's going to happen to me after this. What even is.. after this. The end. Getting caught? Loosing passion for the project and releasing them? No, that's stupid.. Death? If so.. who's? Mine? Them? What was I even going to ask them today?

My vision blurred as I began to zone out, thinking of a question that would cause both an interesting reaction to write down and one that would be individualistic enough to get different answers. I didn't hear silence.. just an echoed tapping, scraping, screaming, crying, all dull and quiet. Like it was happening in the room and I just.. wasn't listening. I blinked for awhile to refocus my eyes before going back over to my desk through the swivel chair, quietly staring down at microphone with bitter hesitance. I didn't even have anything to ask them.. why was I over here..? Why am I running out of purpose because of the lack of them..? There's only two of them after all.. I said I'd end the experiment whenever everyone was dead or I had died first. Just like how any good experiment should end. A scientist never quits in the face of refusal, or anything. I am a scientist. A scientist does not quit. I am a scientist. I am a scientist. I am a scientist.

I am a murderer.

In the middle of my mantra that phrase sat, disrupting ever single clear thought I had even come close to having. Why am I asking so many questions..? You know what, that's not important, and even more so a rhetorical question. Or an oxymoron.. the point is it's not important and not where my focus should be. None of this is my

fault. None of what happened to them is my fault, they agreed to come here. They agreed to give everything up. Everything meant their lives as well.. even if they didn't know that yet. Even if I didn't know that yet. Sure it's a pleasure to watch.. but it's not like you just plan to kill people. If I had planned that I would've done this to so many more people already..

I paused before looking down at my hands, finally realizing I had been subconsciously squeezing them.. until they bled. I just stared as the blood trickled down my palms, turning them slightly out of fascination. Another small point to the fact that the brain was the most interesting machine to study. It would do things like this to itself without even noticing. Horrific, painful injuries all by accident. I'd had such a passion for studying injuries like this.. for studying the world around me. I guess this is one way to do that. Studying people inclosed in an area, meaning no distractions. Just themselves, seeing what they'd do. How their brains work. Where did that passion go..?

I rubbed my eyes to try and wake myself up. To try and get myself out of that state of mind. But it just felt like everything was weighing down on me.. like I just couldn't move. Couldn't continue. Something was forcing me to stop. Something was forcing me to admit that this was wrong. I've known it all along and just have been ignoring it. You're out of motivation, Test Tube. My arm slumped down to my side as I glanced back up to the viewing window. They were just.. staring at me. I had no idea if they've heard any of my thoughts.. if I've just been speaking the entire time. I tried to move again but my limbs were heavy iron rods.. something I've never had the strength to move, especially not now. I can't just shut down like this. I can't just stop moving like this, I just can't.. die like this.

I tried to tune my hearing back in, trying to hear anything but the dull ringing and screaming I'd been constantly hearing for weeks now. I've just learned how to tune it out.. but come on! Nows not the time for this.. think. We haven't slept in almost two weeks. We haven't had any proper nutrition for almost two years. We've been doing nothing but work and staring at a screen for god knows how long. No wonder my body's shutting down.. I've been abusing it, putting it behind. The coughs, the chills, the lack of weigh, the fevers... I've been dying for awhile. It's just now coming back to

haunt me. Everything slowly faded out to black with the soft ringing in my ears. I just sighed and accepted that this would be it.

But it wasn't.

When I opened my eyes again, I winced. The lights around me were mercilessly blazing a bright white. Almost like the rooms I used, except instead of an off grey. As I sat up I groaned, my top still feeling as heavy as five tons and my insides feeling like they had all been dumped back out. All there was to look at was white. All I had ever been looking at was white. Then came the echoing sound. The horrible, echoing sound. The clicking of keyboard keys. The scratch of a pencil's lead. The sound of papers being tapped against a desk, and a sigh of satisfaction. Next thing I knew, I was faced with myself. When this whole thing had started. Despite the fact that her mouth was moving, all I could hear were the sounds that came from her actions. The shuffling of footsteps. The sound of plastic rubbing against wood as she picked up our phone case.

I didn't regret a thing then. I knew what I was going to do. I did this to them on purpose. They willingly came with me. I set them up to suffer. I set myself up to fail. I set myself up to die. Die down there, with them. Was I more innocent then? I don't know. Not if I had planned something like this. What was I like.. now? A monster. A murderer. Selflessly devoted to this experiment. I was certain no one would catch me. They did. They caught on. But there was no way for them to get to me. I made sure of it. They tried. That attempt died. I tried to get them out of here. Give them hope. That died to. All I am is a bringer of death. A shattered shell of anyone I had planned to be. What I'm doing isn't right.. but it's what I want. As much as she would've died it, this is what we wanted. We wanted to see the blood, the horror, the despair. We wanted to loose everything we had. We wanted to die being known for something.

When I looked back up, she was staring at me. Nothing but blazing white light and my own silhouette. Looking directly back at me. She set the phone down, and walking towards me. I didn't move. I knew what was coming. She was going to take me to whatever was after this. I was finally going to die. Instead, she just looked at me, and my hearing finally tuned in.

"...you're going to finish this. You didn't do all of this for nothing."

It was like Pandora's box.
The second she picked the phone back up, everything practically exploded with what had happen. Horrible flashes of blood splatters, the roaring of flames, the endless high pitched screaming. The sound of a doors lock being pulled on, violently shaking in its hinges. The sound of wood splinting, shaking sobs, squealing, glass shattering. All of it echoing at full force and volume through that empty white space, forcing me to drop to my knees. I opened my mouth to scream but nothing came out. Everything continued to get louder, drowning out all of my senses. I struggled to open my eyes, only seeing the shadows of my victims when I did. Then I felt a crack. Then another. And another. The sound of glass breaking filled my ears as I felt the webs splinter through my body. I wrapped my hands around my sides before finally I-

The ceiling. That's the first thing I saw as my eyes shot open again. My breathing heavy as I felt hot tears running down my face. I shakily ran my hands over the small cracks in my body, on my side. On my face. I frantically glanced around, struggling to determine whether or not this was another dream. A dream that would continue on and on. A dream I'd be trapped in forever. A dream to torture me, just like I deserved. But there, in the corner of my eye, I saw it. The blinking of the empty space on my computer. The blinking space that mocked me never felt so pleasant. Next to that computer was a cup. The cup of water. For my medication. I continued to struggle to move the chair back to the desk. My hands burned from their raw wounds as I forced myself forward. With a weak grip I grabbed both the medicine and the water, forcing it all into my mouth, down my throat.

Then I sat there, waiting for the pain to go away. It was supposed to take 30 minutes. It felt so much longer than that. At some point, I was able to feel my legs again. The blinding headache dulled to only a soft throb. The hunger in my stomach continued to pulse and roar, but I could deal with that later. I shakily pushed myself up in my chair, resting my face on my knuckles as I stared back at the blinking space. My gaze drifted back over to the subjects in the room. 1 wasn't paying me any attention. I don't think she noticed what happened.

Thank god. 3 looked back at me once he realized I was back up at my desk. I couldn't read his eye, or his expression. We just.. looked at eachother. I quickly looked back down at my keyboard, and slowly began to type again.

Log Date 1570: Things are no longer going as planned. This is.. disruptive, but manageable. All I need to do is reformulate and continue until the experiment has ended. 1 and 3 still seem to be in stable condition. I am still in stable condition. The nightmares are continuing but.. I think that's manageable to. I'm going to finish this

I didn't start all of this for nothing.

32: Out there

"13/5/xx
To those who are concerned,
Which I would assume is all of you. You wouldn't be reading this letter otherwise. Either that, or my brain has finally given in and made me send this to the wrong address. If so, please do not read this letter any further. It does not concern you, and you have no reason to be concerned. Thank you very much.

Now, for those of you who are supposed to be reading this. For once, I regret to inform you of another passing. Subject 2, who was formerly known to all of you as Paintbrush. I can't say that their death was painless, nor can I say it was quick. They all had to watch. I had to watch. I always watch. I'm quite sure that they died of shock rather than anything else. How else doesn't matter. They're dead and that's all you need to know.

You should know my orders by now. There's no reason to revive them, but if you do there's not much I can do about it. I've given up trying to control the outside world. I'm perfectly in control here.

Sincerely, TMK"

I stared down at the letter in disgust as I finished reading. The shocked faces around me only seemed to mirror my internalized horror and rage. Enough was enough, especially when you were faced with that. No one wants to read these stupid letters, but it feels like we get sent one almost every three months. There's no reason for it. We've figured out who she is at this point, she knows who we are, it's stupid. Especially how she still tries to be dignified in her writing. The high and mighty crap got tiring very quickly.

No one said anything for awhile. How could you? You thought you were used to it and then suddenly there's another letter. It's.. horrifying. God I can't imagine how the others are doing down there..

who knows if more are dead and she's just not telling us..? My thoughts were interrupted by Mic hitting herself in the face with one of the clipboards.

"God.. god I'm so stupid! I saw her! I saw her and didn't do a thing! I could've stopped this and I didn't!"
"...Mic please."
"She's not wrong."

My gaze quickly snapped over to Nickel, who had chimed after Suitcase's pleading attempt to try and make her feel better. As far as I knew, it was just us, the Grand Slams, and Taco whenever she felt like showing up. Asking another Bright Light to join us had become extremely difficult to do after Apple became a midnight snack. Nickel's gaze was unapologetic as he sat on top of Baseball, rolling his eyes at Suitcase's remark.

"She had a chance and blew it. She deserves to feel stupid over being stupid."
"We didn't know it was her! We thought it was Taco!"
"And? She's been Buddy Buddy with her for months! She had a cut on our lead and didn't say anything!"
"It's not like she was the only one!"

I heard an agitated interjection begin to start from across the table, before the room remained to tense silence. I'd.. missed a lot, but apparently Knife had known about the whole Mic-Taco alliance for awhile. Which threw off the theory of Taco being behind the whole thing because of her history with everyone else. I wouldn't be against suspecting her, but obviously we knew our culprit now. Tent searching comes in handy when people go missing. We all just sat and stared at the table before Baseball swallowed.

"..so what are we gonna do?"
"What can we do? We tried sending somebody down there and they died! She came up here, and people died anyways! The only answer so far is to just leave them down there to die!"
"Dont you dare fucking suggest that."

I growled, narrowing my gaze at the rooms loudmouth. Nickel only met my gaze with a challenging glare, raising an eyebrow at my

response.

"What, you got a better idea?"
"How would you feel if you were stuck down there? For as long as we were? Thinking that help was going to come? Hope is the absolute worst thing you could have. Because then you're crushed again, and again, and again as you watch the life fade from your friends eyes. It happens long before they really die. Having to sit in complete isolation? You really want to leave them down there?"

I watched his jaw fidget before finally giving in to defeat. I sat back in my chair from where I had been leaning forwards, before sighing and staring at the ceiling. As much as I wanted to fight him on it, I really couldn't. There was very little we could actually do to try and fix all of this, other than storm the place and get all of us trapped down there. We had already agreed to try and use that as a last resort, because only some of us could actually fit down the tube and we could only go one at a time. I mean who was I to come down here and act like I had all the solutions? I couldn't even save the right people. When I glanced back down I noticed Suitcases face strained in thought

"...do we.. know where that slide leads-? Like, does it lead all the way down, or just the entrance-?"
"Just the entrance if I remember it right-
It's an elevator, a massive shelf, a desk, sink.. Yknow, the usual."

Mic's tone read as slightly sarcastic considering the situation, but we understood what she meant. Suitcase sat in silence, her face reflecting the gears turning in her head. She blinked a few times before sighing, whatever she had been planning obviously falling out. A put a hand against my face to rest my arm against the groups table before giving my final thought.

"Mic, I want you to come with me back to that thing and tell me everything you know."
"What? You really think that's going to help anything?"
"Well unless we're gonna play the dynamite card or end up mad scientists ourselves figuring this thing out, it's our only option."

She gave a sigh of defeat before getting up, waving a dismissive hand

to the others in the room. Meeting was over. Everyone knew that. They probably would've left on their own accord anyways, knowing the people we're stuck working with.

———

There was a slight change of plans. I stared down at Mic as she rustled through Test Tubes long abandoned tent, trying to find as much evidence or useful items as she could. On the dreaded walk to the hidden murder machine she was somehow struck with the idea that she could've been hiding something useful in her tent. Which, while not a wrong assumption, would rub just about anyone the wrong way.

"You're pretty good at going through people's stuff, aren't you?"
"Oh shut up, it's not like you have any better ideas."

Mic looked up at me over her shoulder and I rolled my eyes, holding a slight smirk. She was checking all the places you'd think to find things in a room. Bed, books, cabinet, everywhere. All she has actually found was a few tranquilizer darts, some shoddy smoke bombs, the manifesto for the horror show that sat infront of us, and a half eaten granola bar. The results of her search made me want to smack my head through a wall.

"...this was a waste of time."
"No, it wasn't! You of all people should know how fire alarms work!"
"Excuse me?"

I glared back at her, only to be met with a bored disappointed glance. I watched her pick up the smoke bomb and look it over in her hands, before tossing it up and down like a beanbag.

"When the smoke goes off, it'll set off the smoke detectors. Smoke detectors trigger sprinklers after a long enough amount of time. If the lab is in as bad a condition as she is-"
"Right."
"The sprinklers should short circuit whatever is left of her system!"
"...by god, your creepy hobbies chalk up to something."
"Shut up."

I scooped up the rest of the bombs in my arms, before pausing to

think about what these were really meant for in the context of everything else. The snack meant nothing but.. that journal haunts me. Whatever's in it.. god. No one wants to think about that. I shook my head and began to walk out of the tent, Mic following close behind.

Walking back to that machine felt like walking to death row. I shivered and tried to swallow my fear, but that dread in the pit of my stomach continued to threaten to rise. Mic put a hand to my arm and gave me an anxious smile of support, which I only gave a half effort shrug. Sometimes silence was needed. But god how much that silence could hurt. As she approached the front of the machine to enter the code, she turned back to me.

"...do you wanna do it, or do you wanna roll them in?"
"...I'm burning that hell to the ground."

Mic nodded, swallowing slightly before inputting the code once. And then again. And again. And again. Getting more aggressive each time and only furthering my nerves. She then looked back to me with a face I could read from a mile away, seeming too scared to actually say it.

She reset the code.

I took a breath to try and calm the rage that thought had sparked in me. It was exactly what I said before. Hope ripped straight out of your arms, and then slapping you in the face. That breath quickly turned into a series of breaths, to the point where I was hyperventilating. Then it stopped, and I screamed. Punching that stupid machine as hard as I could. As hard I wanted to punch her. As hard as she needed to die.

And with the searing pain that ripples through my knuckles and arm, came a thud of something hitting the floor. A broken tube out of the side of the machine. I turned to Mic, and we looked at eachother in that blissful kind of silence, and then began to laugh. We laughed together, in both distress and joy. The kind of laugh that was deceptively comforting. A laugh I had heard before. We took a second, both grabbing a bomb, before setting them at the entrance of the tube. It needed straightening out before I could fully estimate that

it would reach the bottom. I pressed my fingers against one of the fuses to light it and then looked over to Mic as I rolled the bomb down the tunnel

"...we finally did it."

God were we in for a treat

33: Nightmares

Log Date 1571: He.. he's gone. I saw him. He's gone.

[Fan's POV]
It was nighttime. At least.. I could assume it's nighttime. I strained my eye to look up at the ceiling, still seeing nothing but the grey padding above me. Lightbulb had given up and went to sleep. She seemed more satisfied lately. She was sleeping. I.. couldn't. I just wasn't tired anymore. And as amazing as she is.. I don't know who she is anymore. She's there, and then she's not, and then she's like this, and then this completely other thing that isn't anything like her and then

Paintbrush dies.
She was getting better, and then Paintbrush died.
I don't know what would've been worse. No ones like themselves anymore, nothing is the way it's supposed to be, even for here. I got used to it and then it just wasn't that way anymore. Anytime something is normal, someone dies. That's the one shred of coincidence I can cling to and I don't want it. I'm not normal anymore. I think I know me, and then I hear things. I think I'm over it, and then I'm not. It doesn't make any sense. It needs to make sense.

That somewhat familiar feeling of dread and nausea fills me, and I push myself off my back. I need to stop thinking and can't. I don't know how they live like this. I don't know how she lives like this. I need to know and I can't. I pick up my phone and desperately click it's power button. Still nothing. I got impatient and recharged it too early, and fried it. I needed that. It had the way out of here. It had what I had learned. But now I can't have that either. We don't deserve this. I mean, maybe they don't and I do? Do I? They probably know me better than me. She has a reason for this. I did something. Surely I did. Surely I-

Door. The door. And the soft smell of smoke.

I hesitantly creeped off my knees and onto my feet, shakily tiptoeing towards the door of the entrance. The soft squelching of my feet against the floor and my breathing sounded as loud as a jet engine. I sucked in my breath and held it as I rose my hand to the knob, looking back at Lightbulb. Her expression was empty. Almost like she didn't dream. But I know she does. She has to. You need to dream to be creative. And she's so creative. So proud of herself. She deserves to be. I know out of everything, she will always have her pride. That I can rely on, even though I don't think I will ever need to.

The cold metal of the door handle felt bone chilling. That feeling of dread creeping across my arms rose to my sides as I began to shake. It's not going to work. It's not going to work. We're going to burn alive and we're all going to die. Secluded and alone. We'll all suffocate. The pressure only made the feeling of suffocation worse. And then it turned.

The knob turned.

My breath left my body as I felt that handle turn. I felt tears burn at my eye, and cause the other socket to ache with the sewn emptiness. The feeling of soul crushing dread felt so.. so heavy. But that little bit of adrenaline was addictive. She wouldn't just leave the door unlocked. It's a trap. She's watching us right now anyways.

That thought felt like a slap to the face. I almost threw up as I turned around to look at the viewing window, feeling everything about to give out from under me as I saw a glint. But the window was empty. The table was empty. Even when I tilted myself to look at other angles, I didn't see her. She.. wasn't there. She wasn't there. My gaze then violently flicked over to the door. She could be outside it right now. Waiting. Expecting. If I open this door, she'll be there. She'll punish me. I don't want that. I can't. I can't. I can't. I can't.

Gripping on the door handle made my fingers burn. Doubling over and squeezing my eyes shut was even worse. I can't. I can't. I can't. I can't lose. The pent up feeling of needing to scream felt like it was clawing at my throat. Unbearable. But all that shaking and gripping turned that handle. And whether I was trying to or not.. it opened. I

froze, not daring to move as the door clicked open. Dead silence. I carefully leaned into the crack of the door. Dead silence. I set one foot out. Dead silence. I winced, carefully opening my eye.

There was so much to look at. The wall was painful to look at. The lights. The smells. The textures of everything. The feeling of something that wasn't ventilated. It forced me to my knees as I choked and cried. Too much to look at. Too much to feel. But I laughed. Putting my hands over my mouth, I laughed. I cried. I can't. I can't take it. I know here but I can't take it. Trying to silence myself was hard but.. if I get caught she'll kill me. I know she will. She killed everyone else. I'm not any different to her than the others are.. aren't I..? I forced my eye open and looked over my shoulder. She was still asleep. Good. I'm not.. I'm not leaving without her. She'll come back for me. I'm not leaving for long after all..

I hesitantly took another step through the door, into the hall. I leaned against the wall to try to hold myself. I know where I am. I'm safe. I'm happy. I'm grounded. I'm.. I'm scared. I ran my hands over the walls and almost let out a cry of relief as I felt something that wasn't polyurethane padding. It was dry. Smooth. Blue. So blue. A dusty, Greyish blue. A medical blue. But it was blue. A very light, almost white blue. But it's blue. It's blue. It's blue. It's paint. It's blue. The floor is polished. The lights above are yellowed. It hurts.. so much. So much to look at. But.. it's there. I'm out.

When I turned to walk down the hall, something red caught the corner of my eye. I felt paralyzed. Keep moving. Don't look. You don't need to know. But that curiosity couldn't be helped.

The second I looked, it dropped me to my knees.

Cracking. Spreaded. Blood. The drips had dried. The blood was rotting into the wood. Panic attack. Hah.. that's funny... right..? Certainly.. accurate... who's.. who's blood.. is this..?
It felt almost like a stab to the chest when the realization hit me. I almost couldn't get back up. The screaming ran through my head. Her gaze as she tore me into pieces. The squeaking. The shattering. The sound of plastic hitting the floor. All of it happened all at once. Overwhelming. Hurting. Broken.

And then all I heard was an oscillating fan. The soft hum of the lights grounded me. The sounds weren't familiar. The sounds that were so.. so over stimulating. The sounds that were painful.. helped me. I gripped at the floor as I shakily stood up. I only had so much time to wander before she realized I had left after all. Would she.. would she even care if I left..? She looked so tired.. and sick.. but she had already given so much to this. Disgusting.

I kept one hand running against the wall as I walked past the door. I.. I have to come back. I have to come get her. I have to. She doesn't deserve to be left in there alone. I'll come back. Holding one hand out in front of me to try and make things more balanced. Everything far away liked so blurry now.. the headache had already started to make me want to bash my head against the wall. But it.. wasn't as loud anymore. As I blinked and walked, it slowly became easier to realize where I was. I know these hallways. They're just like the ones upstairs but.. longer.

So many doors. I walked past so many doors, with glinting plates. Numbers on them. Not in order. I didn't want to find out. I don't think I can take anymore of that.. honestly I don't know how far I've gone from the door at this point. Then I smelt it again. The whiff of smoke. The smell of burning that only got stronger as I followed it. I continued to follow it. As I turned the corner I-

We locked gazes. She saw me. She saw me. She saw me. She saw me. But.. she didn't move. She looked at me. She looked at me and didn't say anything. That.. pain. In her eyes. Almost like she still felt. Like she knew me. Like she wanted to know me. She squinted. I stared emptily back. I'm sure the rest of my body gave away how terrified I was but.. I had to keep my eyes empty. We both see things.. I know that.. shes complained about it before. It's not fair for me to exploit that but.. I want to live. I have to live. She could rip me into bits and no one would know.

And then she kept walking. She saw me. Turned around. Kept walking. Silent. She didn't say anything but she saw me. And then I was back on the floor. Even before I felt my body give out again, I was on the floor. A violently riveting mess. I can't stop it. It all tore through my head again, the voices screaming even louder as I just wanted to give up. But.. she wanted that. I'm sure she did. That's why

she didn't make me go back. She'd just let me kill myself. One hand. Grip my fingers. One hand. Up. Get up. Get up. Get up.

One arm. One hand. One arm. Two hands. Two arms. Shaking. So much shaking. So.. so much shaking. Get up. Get up. One body. Up. One foot. Straining. Two feet. Touch the wall. Keep walking. ...we've got it.

I dragged myself down the hall to follow the smell of smoke. Down the hall. Down farther. So many doors. So much suffering. So much echoed screaming. Water dripping from the ceiling. And then there was the lobby. Just like the upstairs. The machine, the sink, the counter. The shelves. The boxes. The tools. And then in the middle of the floor, drawled out smoke. Off a circle on the floor. I nudged it carefully with my foot, and a bit more smoke drawled out. I felt so.. exhausted. Like I was going to pass out. This only made the screaming worse. But that screaming.. that screaming..

I picked up the bomb. Squeezing it between my fingers. Feeling the plastic crack beneath my fingers before I screamed and threw it at the ceiling. ..what.. what was I doing..? I can't.. I can't.. I can't-

I must've hit something.
Suddenly something roared, knocking me to the floor. Flooding the hallway with smoke. And then came the sirens.

I have to get back to her
I have to..
get..
h..

34: Sparks Fly

Log Date 1572: It's.. gone. All of them.. are gone. All of it.. gone in an instant.. this is where we're all going to die. The experiment.. the experiments a success. I'm.. kind of proud. To you sick freaks who.. who are following after me on this.. reading these logs.. don't bother checking for more.. I.. I need to go

[Lightbulbs POV]
I hazily open my eyes and am filled with disappointment. Shit. I didn't die in my sleep. That's perfect. I screwed my eyes back shut in frustration, rolling back over. I held my breath, just hoping I'd pass out so I wouldn't have to deal with being here. With a gasp, I gave up. I laid there catching my breath before pausing. I don't hear someone else breathing.

"Fan?! FAN?!"
Sitting up with a snap, I instantly curled in on myself. Shaking it off, I looked over. No Fan. The other side.. no Fan. No no no no no, don't tell me he.. he can't have. When I looked forward I felt my blood run cold. The door.. was left open. Looking up, she wasn't there either . She.. took him. She took him and forgot to close the door. I quickly looked for any evidence of struggle or a hint of where they went. Nothing.

Getting up was a struggle, considering I've just been opting not to move recently. But I managed it. Had to grab the wall, but managed it. I felt my gut fill with static as I approached the door. With a shaky hand I reached out, nudging the door slightly more open before quickly drawing it back. When I looked back up.. nothing bad happened. The door just.. opened. I could.. hear something though..?

When I finally tuned back in, it hit me like a brick. The volume of the sirens made me push my hands over my head with a force I thought would shatter me. God, it smelled horrible too. Like something was..

burning. Shakily I dashed out into the hallway, hands still up to try and drown the sound back out. The smell was worse out here. I had.. no idea where he went. But the door.. part of the warning was flaked off. Hah, I did that.. didn't I? How.. how long ago was that.. good god. We don't have time for this. He could be burning alive right now and I'm wasting time reminiscing.

From what I can remember.. going right leads to the main hall. Going left just leads to the end of this one. So he must've gone right. As I started running, I immediately hit the floor. As I did, I realized my adrenaline had once again tuned me out. The sprinklers had started going, and the floor of course was wet. The smoke didn't stop though.. when I finally got up and kept moving, the smoke only got worse. I didn't hear anything though.. couldn't see anything either. The smoke started burning my eyes. How was I going to find him like this..? Cmon Lightbulb, you're bright, you can do this..

As I thought, it got worse. The lights started flickering, as they usually did but.. they all went out. Instantly. The water.. it must've gotten into the fuse box. Dammit! Now we're both going to be stuck wandering in the dark. I wheezed, narrowing my eyes in an attempt to see and breathe. The fire alarms gave a dim light but that.. wasn't enough. Wait. Bright. I'm bright! I may have no idea where I'm going, but I know that I'm bright. Even brighter when I'm actually lit up.

I struggled to start though. When I shattered, my own fuse must've gotten messed up.. and stupid Twisted Tube never realized. No way in hell am I going to ask her for anything.. never again. I'm never having hope for her or anyone down here again.. the only hope I can rely on is my own. My own, to get out of here. Grab Fan and get out. Last resort then.. I rubbed my hands together until I felt a charge. Then, I grabbed my shoulders and released. As sharp jolts rolled through me, I squeezed my eyes shut. You'd think I wouldn't be able to feel it, but currents aren't exactly pleasant for me either.

Shakily, I opened my eyes. The stinging sensation hit immediately, but I was able to.. actually see in front of me. It worked! I knew I had this under control. I just.. need to get used to it. I squeezed my shoulders again until my arms ached and the shaking stopped. After that, I got back up. Started running. Calling out for Fan. Praying that I'd get any kind of response. The burning brought tears to my eyes,

that I just had to shove off. Not now. He's in here somewhere and I needed to find him.

And then I tripped. Again. The sound of shattering hit me before the pain did. Of course, I let out a screech of pain, hissing and rolling to my side. As I curled up, I prayed I didn't crack the good half of my face. My eye hadn't been all that good since that terror had fixed it. When I held my hand up, I could see out of both eyes. Thank god. When I felt through my face, I cut my fingers pretty quickly. I don't have a mirror but.. looks like I just barely missed my eyes. There were tons of cracks though.. one more fall like that and I'm done for.

When I got to my knees, my head throbbed. Sometimes I wish I wasn't made out of glass.. but I turned to look at what I tripped on. A red mass of.. FAN! I quickly grabbed him, starting to shake him

"Fan! Fan, oh my god, please don't be dead! Come on! You've got to get up, please..! I can't lose you too.."
"..mm.. wh.. huh..?"

As I watched him blearily open his eye to look at me, I squeezed him close. Which caused him to choke.

"lIGHTBULB-"
"Ah-! Sorry! Sorry! I thought you were dead-"
"N..no.. not dead.. I just.. passed out I think.. she-"
"Left the door unlocked. I saw. She's.. getting careless."
"But.. but this is our chance! Our chance to get out..! She saw me and-"
"She saw you?!"
"Let me finish-
She saw me and she.. she didn't say anything. I don't.. I don't think she thought I was real. Like.. like how I see you.. when you're not there."
"God.. Fan.."

He set his hands on my shoulders, giving me a sad smile before glancing around with another wheezing cough. I wasn't breathing too good either, swallowing back every cough I could. His smile dropped as he realized the power was out, before looking back at me in fear. It seems then he also realized he was soaking wet

"...the smoke set the sprinklers off, which in turn shorted a fuse box and now.. everything's off. I don't.. I don't know what's burning though."
"The smoke was still going when I went out but.. but I don't know.. why it's gotten worse.."
"...gotten worse-?"
"It wasn't.. nearly this bad.. when I came out."

He seemed disturbed by my expression dropping, so I quickly picked up the most comforting smile I could manage in the moment. I felt my lungs and head ache as I forced the expression, but he needs this. He.. he trusts me more than anything.

"Well.. we can-"
A cough forced itself out of my throat before I could swallow it down, and it forced me into a fit. It felt like my chest was being squeezed as it was cough after cough. I felt like I was choking and drowning at the same time. Fan, poor fan.. he stared at me mortified, ushering to help before I held a hand out for him tk stop. I took a few breaths to compose myself.. I can do this.. I can do this. And.. I managed to stop it.

"...we can find a way out here now. You and me. Together."
"..your hand is bleeding.."
"Yeah.. yeah I know.. don't worry too much about it."
"Do you.. know a way out..?"
"I think you'd know better than me duderino. You used to be down here all the time."
"Never in this part... I didn't know she had all this down here."

He started to cough again as he tried to stand up, his legs shaking and almost dropping him to the floor. I stood up to catch him, giving his hands a squeeze to steady him as he continued to choke. Now I knew how he had just felt, because I just wanted to fix him. Make it stop. But.. but he's got it. He took a deep breath and then gave a nod, showing me he was okay. When I looked around, he was right. There was more smoke than before.. which isn't a good sign. But at least I know.. he isn't burning alive now. Which is good.

Somehow all of this was.. making me feel like my old self. The one that.. died down here. The one that would've loved running through

water, and smoke.. and finding a way out. She would've thought this was a challenge for her to win.. and would've laughed along the way. Ever the optimist.. at least that much hasn't changed. At least.. I don't think it has. But that's not what I need to think about right now. Fan had let go of my hands, starting to walk ahead of me. I followed him, basically trusting his judgement. All of my gut feelings had run out.

"She isn't one to change things.. so the rest of this place.. is probably built.. just like the rest of it."
He paused to cough again.
"So.. if we just.. follow the door plates and hall signs.. we should.. make it back.. to the main hall."
"God I hope so.. this is our last chance."

As we walked, we tended to bust into coughing fits more frequently. The smoke was getting worse.. and it was getting darker. The heat that was originally creeping up my legs was now almost unbearable. Which.. means we're likely getting closer to whatever's burning. We don't have too much of a choice to turn around though, because.. we'd just burn alive in there too. I'm not flammable but.. he is. So my worries aren't exactly behind me.

I saw his breaths starting to get more labored, and his steps get more shaky. Obviously the heat, smoke, and anxiety was starting to get to him. Thinking about it.. the air conditioning was probably shut off as well. Which is why the smoke had gotten so bad.. fuck. This really did continue to become more of an absolute disaster, didn't it..? I held his hand and started guiding him down the hall, letting him keep one hand on the way.

I realized it started getting lighter as we walked. Which meant one of two things. We're getting closer to windows and exits, or weve reached the fire. When I heard Fan's scream ring through my ears, I realized it was the second option. When I looked ahead finally, we had made it to the main hall. The bad news was.. the entirety of the lobby was on fire. Just about everything that could burn was burning. And the fuse box in the side of the room continued to spark.

The sprinklers weren't doing shit now. The shelves, the stools, the tables.. all of it was on fire. The brilliance of the flames hurt my eyes, and the heat made me immediately shut my light off. Fan only

continued to scream, pulling at my hand to try and get me to run. But.. there was nowhere to run. There was only so long until those flames found our door and set us ablaze too. We just.. had to go through. Deny everything fire safety ever taught us. Sorry Smoky.

Any attempt to find a fire extinguisher was met with failure. We must've passed one on the walk down the hallway but.. we couldn't risk going back and getting caught. With another tug on my hand I turned around and faced Fan

"...we have to go through."
"We can't go through! You'll die!"
"I won't die! I'll get real hot sure, but you're the one made out of paper and wood!"
"Then leave me! I'll.. I can.. I-"
"Like hell am I leaving you to die down here! That's not fair! If you die, I die! I said we're getting out of here together!"
"But how are you-"
"Just.. just stay behind me and.. try not to let the sparks touch you."

Get out of here together. Hah..
God I hope I don't regret saying that.

35: Escapism

[Lightbulb's POV]

My pulse was throbbing in my ears as I tried to think of a plan. Thinking in this heat was miserable. With each spark causing another roar of flames, I knew we only had mere minutes before all of us were consumed. Sure, I could survive a few minutes in the flames but.. Fan would be a goner.

He was still shaking in my arms, obviously trying nothing to choke on the smoke that continuously tried to suffocate us. He looked horrified. I was horrified. There's.. nothing either of us could do about it. But if I kept waiting, there was certainly no future for either of us. Think, Lightbulb, think. I looked down at Fan, who hesitantly looked up at me. I forced a smile on my face as I gave a small nod, and then snapped him shut.

I hated doing that. It felt like a physical violation. He barely snapped himself shut, let alone have anything else close him. But.. this would give him the best chance of survival. His edges were laminated. Protecting the most flammable parts was vital to making sure he didn't burn to a crisp.

As much as I wanted to take a breath, try to at least attempt to call myself, I knew if I did I would collapse to the ground. I.. don't know if I'd be able to get back up. Falling would.. likely shatter me. Even if it didn't.. I would asphyxiate on that smoke. Neither of us had anything to breathe through, to filter it. It was likely much harder for Fan himself to breathe, considering he was folded in on himself. How did that even work..? He's paper thin enough.. no wonder he made so many jokes about asthma.

"W-wait! L..light, lightbulb please-"

I froze. All my limbs tensed as I glared over my shoulder. The one

who dared to croak a begging plea was exactly who I thought it was. That damn witch. She certainly looked worse for wear. It was so much more obvious now that I could see her up close. You couldn't even call it close, she was a good distance away. She looked like a gust of wind would've knocked her out. She could see the amount of rage in my eyes. She was scared of me. Hah! That's almost funny. She was *scared* of me.

"I.. I know, I know you're a-angry but please-
You, you can't.. you can't, leave, me down here. To, to-"
"To die? You're kidding. You, the great and horrible experimenter, are begging ME, for mercy. You want solace? You want forgiveness? You expect me to SAVE you? After what you've done to ALL OF US?!"

I snarled, causing Fan to whimper and shake in my arms. He never liked conflict. I didn't either, but the fact she's begging me for her life here is pathetic. If she wanted mercy, she should've kept to herself. If she wanted mercy, she should've left Fan alone. If she wanted mercy, she should've Paintbrush alone. Let us go home. Let it be some stupid sleepover and that be the end of it. But she just HAD to keep pushing. Look where that got us all.

She was pathetic.

"You're smart, Test Tube. Figure it out yourself."

I'm not wasting any more time on her. As I finally dashed into the flames, holding my breath, I took one last look backward. Just enough to see her face contort into a scream as the flames swallowed where she was standing. She didn't have the strength to get up. Considering how weak and fucked up her body was, she wouldn't last long.

Good.

Though.. I wasn't doing so good myself. Running head first into a fire with a flammable object wasnt a good idea. It was so.. hard to navigate. The heat seared at my arms, singeing off whatever it could get it's sparks on. I bit the inside of my cheek and gave Fan a squeeze, trying not to scream myself. Fan had pulled all his limbs as close to himself as he could. Waiting for it to be over.

Every now and again I'd find my footing. A spot of the lab that hadn't been consumed yet, or something I could climb on top of to get above the flames. Everytime I did, I felt that.. nagging feeling, to look back. Watch her body burn. Get the solace, the satisfaction out of her suffering. She was likely dead by now. Dead and charred. But.. something in me made me realize doing that would put me on too much of a similar level to her. Just like she had said.

As I jumped, climbed, whatever I could to avoid the burns as much as possible, Fan would shudder or give the occasional yelp from the flames catching him. I had to put out small flames that had gotten to him with the tips of my fingers. I'm.. probably not going to get feeling back in those for awhile. It'll make one ugly set of calluses. Hopefully.. hopefully it'll be a fun story. One day. When I'll.. be with everyone again, and we'll be able to laugh about it.

How many more years is that going to take..? How much longer is she going to have power over us.. be able to hold all of this over our heads..? I'm not.. I'm not the best with coping by any means but.. but Fan.. hes.. likely broken beyond repair. Mentally. Me, more so physically. But.. does that really matter..? Will we truly be able to function in a world that's.. not made for us?

I finally made it to the front of the room. It wasn't going to work. I knew that even if I found a door, there's no way she would have it actually lead up to the surface. People would be able to find this place too easily if she had. Then I remember. The tube. Not.. not her, but the slide that we took to get down here in the first place. There's less fire here, but I don't have time. I just need to go for it. That's what your good at Lightbulb. Taking stupid risks and succeeding.

"..Fan, I need you to.. to stick your arms out.. and, and hold on to me."
I wheezed, feeling myself grow woozy as the smoke finally began to set in. Not only was I stuck on a timer from the burning inferno of the lab, I was stuck on a timer of my own physical lung strength as well. He hesitantly peaked at me, unfolding slightly. He looked.. so scared. He barely trusted me.. I could tell that much. He really thought we were going to die here. I.. I already died here once, I'm not leaving him down here.

But he did it. He wrapped his arms around me and squeezed for dear life. It almost knocked the limited breath I had out of me. Once I adjusted to the mild extra weight on my lower half, I jumped and grabbed on to the linoleum tube. I sighed in relief realizing that the ribbing of the tube would be something to attach myself to. Make climbing up easier. All I had to do was follow the small gusts of fresh air I could feel coming from the tunnel.

"..Fan.. I need you to trust me. If.. if I slip.. stick your legs out, and catch us. I'll pull us up, but.. I don't know how long I'm going to be able to.. hold my strength."
"..we're gonna die here."
"We're.. not going to die here. I'm getting us out. I promise. Please.. please, just trust me. And.. and do what I'm telling you."
"..you.. you promise..?"
"..I promise. Just.. think about what's waiting for us out there. The.. the people, waiting for us out there."
"..okay.. I'll do it."
"..adda boy."

So I began climbing. Fan still kept his face hidden, but he kept one ridge of himself folded out so he'd still be able to see. Despite there not being much to see. It was pitch black in that tunnel, and all I had to go on was the feeling of cold, fresh air. The tunnel echoed the sounds of both of our breathing. Our labored, terrified breathing. In a weird way it was.. comforting. The reaffirmation of knowing we're both alive. Six of us went down that tube. Only two of us are coming out if it. That.. that has to be special, right..?

Every push upwards made me bite my tongue. Bending my arms, pushing my hands against the wall, putting my feet on the ribbing, everything burned. My muscles screamed as I went. My burnt fingertips grew slick with condensation and sweat running off my arms. Each time I slipped those few inches down, it went silent. His breath hitched, mine stopped completely. If I fell at this point, we'd be dropping right into a pit of flames. We both knew the consequences of that.

I groaned as another wave of pain ran through my arms, my muscles tensing and going shaky. All I was running on was.. adrenaline at this point. Everything in my body told me to stop. But I didn't want to

die. I couldn't let him die either. When I looked up.. I realized I could see a light. Not the kind of white light you see when you die, a dim light. A dim, blue toned light. Sunlight. Starlight. Moonlight, I didn't care. It meant I was almost out. WE were almost out. So I dug my burning fingers into the ribbed linoleum and climbed further.

Each rigging step was another slip. My haste was causing me to be careless. Risking another fall, over and over. Eventually I realized that when I reached up, there was nothing to grab. The floor of the tunnel went from a steep decline to a flat surface. It was still dark, but there were bits of light peeking out from the cracks somewhere. We had.. finally made it out. Holy fuck, we actually made it out! I reared my arm back and punched whatever was in front of me with as much strength as I could muster.

That sent us tumbling forwards and out, into something ticklish and partially sharp. I rolled onto my back, and pushed Fan off of me. When I opened my eyes, I was taken aback by the brightness. Raising a hand over my face, I squinted up at what I thought was the sky. It was.. dark outside. A full moon.

"..Fan."
"..what..?"
"Fan open your eyes."
"..eye."
"Shut up and do it."
"..oh my god."

What we were laying on was grass. Grass infront of that stupid soda machine. Smoke was curling out of the side, from where I had punched out the side panel. Every part of my body was screaming, but all I could do was laugh with joy. Laugh, and sob. It hurt. It hurt so bad. It hurt so bad, but it felt so good at the same time. The satisfaction of knowing that we had bested her. That we had managed to get out of here.

Fan started to cry and laugh with me. Neither of us has any strength to get up, to hold each other, to hold hands, share that intimacy that both of us needed so desperately in that moment. But we had done it. We survived. We watched so many of our friends die down there, and we did too. All the people that entered that lab died. The ones that

escaped.. weren't the same people anymore.

Our celebration was interrupted by bright beams of light. We both held our hands over our eyes, wincing and curling in on ourselves. It was other people. People we knew, recognized, but didn't solely remember. They shouted to eachother, words that I understood but didn't process. All I could understand at that moment was myself. Myself and Fan. The only ones that would be able to understand eachother for the rest of our lives. We were the only ones to experience that.

When we were taken for medical repair, we were separated. He cried out for me, reached for my hand as he was carted away on a stretcher. I felt tears prick at my eyes again as they took him from me. But.. I knew we were safe now. They.. they were going to take care of him. They were going to keep us safe. The assessment felt like nothing. Lights were shined in my eyes, all my limbs were poked and prodded at, I was put on table after table. All of it gave me too many painful memories to bare. I hate to admit it.. but I threw a fit.

I screamed, I kicked, everything in my brain telling me that these people were trying to hurt me. Hurt me like she did. The table was cold, the tools looked the same, all of it gave me horrible flashbacks. Especially when they tried to put an IV in. Seeing that needle made me howl with a rage and fear I'm sure they've never seen. They must've thought I was a maniac. Eventually they realized all they had to do was keep my eyes covered.

I don't know what happened to Fan during the period we were separated. Hopefully what he went through wasn't nearly as painful as what I did. They didn't do anything about the chip. I didn't have mine anymore but.. I could still see the raised flesh on Fan's hand when we were eventually able to reunite. We both had horrendous malnutrition, third degree burns, scarring, blindness, near organ failure, that kind of stuff. A pair of broken toys.

Being able to just.. sit on the couch with him. Was a nice relief. The ambiance of the hospital drumming in the background. We didn't say anything to eachother, covered in bandages like that. There wasn't anything to say.

All we needed was silence.
The silence.
And each other